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ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

By

NARENDRA KRISHNA SINHA

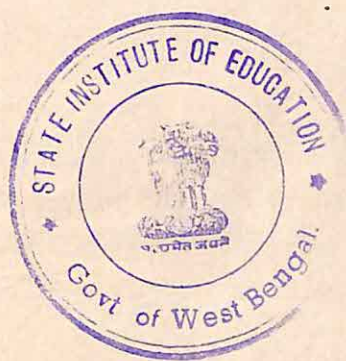
*Asutosh Professor of Medieval and Modern Indian History
University of Calcutta*



ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE CENTENARY COMMITTEE

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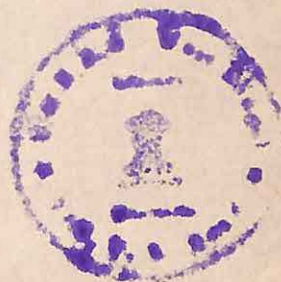
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Published by
Sri Priya Ranjan Sen
1 Dover Lane, Calcutta 19

5.4.94

8118



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Printed by
Prabhat Chandra Ray
Sri Gouranga Press Private Ltd.
5 Chintamani Das Lane, Calcutta-9

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PREFACE

In April 1964, Sri Priya Ranjan Sen informed me, on behalf of Asutosh Mookerjee Centenary Committee, that the Committee had entrusted me with the work of writing the biography of Sir Asutosh. I had my doubts about my competence. But for a teacher and research worker, who is to some extent a beneficiary of some of the most cherished reforms of Sir Asutosh, this offer was a great honour. I agreed with some hesitation.

I could not possibly be an ideal biographer of Asutosh Mookerjee. I never came into personal contact with him. I was an undergraduate student when he died. But I know how much space he occupied in the eyes of his contemporaries. I retain a vivid impression of the atmosphere of those days which can not be imbibed from documents. When I became a teacher under the Council of Post-graduate Teaching in Arts in the University of Calcutta I could see for myself that many of the academic traditions I admired owed their existence to him. This is the store of direct knowledge I possess. For the rest, as in all historical investigations, I had to collect available data from contemporary and near contemporary documents as also from some dependable secondary sources. I suffered from one sense of inferiority. I have no knowledge of law and I was, therefore, not in a position to read his judicial decisions of twenty years with a view to forming an adequate impression of his great work in the Calcutta High Court. For Chapter III I, therefore, decided to depend upon secondary sources to a considerable extent. But from what he wrote and what he said on law and legal studies, I could see how his mind worked. From the point of view of history the jurist and judge is less important than the educationist and patriot.

This is a biographical study more in historical than in personal terms. I claim no special competence as a bio-

grapher. I have, however, tried to convey to succeeding generations the atmosphere in which Asutosh Mookerjee lived and worked. I have made this study as documented as I possibly could. The interest of this biographical study depends as much upon the stature of the man as upon the scale of his achievements.

Sri Prafulla Chandra Sen, Chief Minister of West Bengal, took special interest in this work. Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri, now deceased, formerly Education Minister of West Bengal, shared with other members of the Asutosh Mookerjee Centenary Committee the responsibility for asking me to write this biography. I am grateful to Sri Priya Ranjan Sen, Secretary of the Centenary Committee, for all that he has done to make things easy for me.

I had long talks with Sri Rama Prasad Mookerjee, eldest son of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. He has been of the greatest help to me in my quest for information on the life of Sir Asutosh. Professor Radhabinod Pal, the eminent jurist, advised me not to indulge in the technicalities of law in which I am utterly deficient. I know that Chapter III is inadequate. Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Dr. Srikumar Banerjee and Sri Rama Prasad Mookerjee read this book in manuscript. Their criticisms and suggestions have been of considerable help to me.

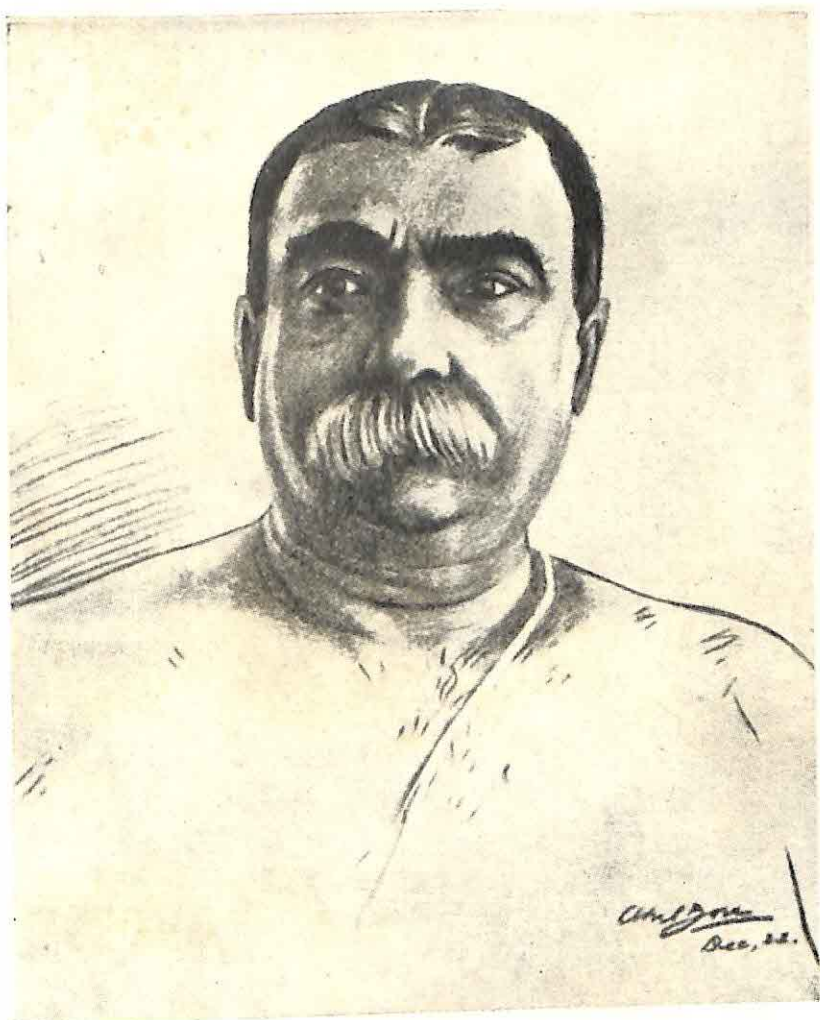
Sri Sourin Ray, Deputy Director, National Archives of India, gave me facilities which enabled me to study relevant official records during a short stay in New Delhi. I am also much obliged to Dr. R. N. Sen for permission to use his paper on Mathematical Writings of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. I should also place on record my appreciation of the assistance I received from Sri Amalendu De in collecting my materials. The valuable assistance I received from my son Pradip should also be acknowledged.

15 February, 1966.

N. K. SINHA

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY



THE BENGAL TIGER
A SKETCH BY SHRI ATUL BOSE





LADY JOGAMAYA MOOKERJEE

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS—EDUCATION—CHOICE OF PROFESSION

Asutosh Mookerjee was born on 29th June, 1864 in Calcutta. His father Gangaprasad Mookerjee was then a student of the Government Medical College, Calcutta. He took his M. B. degree two years after the birth of his son and very soon became a busy medical practitioner in Bhowanipore, Calcutta. Asutosh Mookerjee was brought up in affluence. His father commanded an extensive practice. But Gangaprasad Mookerjee had known what poverty meant. He had been able to study in the Presidency College and in the Medical College mainly with the help of merit scholarships.

One characteristic episode in the life of Gangaprasad Mookerjee should be mentioned in a biography of his son. It reveals a quality which his son inherited. Gangaprasad was very much liked by Principal Charles of the Medical College. After the results of the M. B. Examination were published he was recommended by the Principal for a part-time appointment to the military secretary to the Viceroy, who wanted a part-time doctor for the Viceroy's establishment. The Principal thought that Gangaprasad Mookerjee would thus be able to tide over the lean years of private practice. The Military Secretary interviewed him and was very pleased with him. He

was asked to join the next day, but as he was coming out he was told that he should come properly dressed. Gangaprasad Mookerjee was taken by surprise because his linen was quite clean. He was in his coat, *dhoti* and shoes. The Military Secretary said that he should have a pair of trousers. He thanked the Military Secretary, came out of his room, went to Principal Charles, told him that his friend had treated him very kindly but what he really wanted was not a good doctor but a pair of trousers. He therefore decided not to accept the appointment because this would not be consistent with self-respect. He would depend upon his limited resources.¹

Asutosh Mookerjee had his early lessons in Bhowanipore Chakraberia School. In his tenth year he had a very serious illness and he was sent to Mathura for convalescence. When he was returning to Calcutta after regaining his health the train in which he was travelling halted for sometime at Mughal Sarai railway junction. He caught a glimpse of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar in a railway compartment at a considerable distance. He rushed across the platform, came to him and took the dust of his feet. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's unmistakable features were engraved on the mind of every schoolboy in Bengal. This was the first accidental meeting of the most illustrious Indian educationist of the nineteenth century and the boy who was destined to become the greatest Indian educationist of the twentieth century.

¹ 'Dhara' in Jugantar, 7th Ashar 1371, an article written by Sri Ramaprasad Mookerjee.

Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar was a little surprised. The boy mentioned the name of his father. Vidyasagar naturally enquired about his studies. He replied that his father taught him at home and he would very soon take admission into a high English school. He bowed again and hurriedly went back to his compartment. Not long after this meeting they met again in a Calcutta bookshop. Vidyasagar made a present of a copy of Robinson Crusoe to him. He must have been impressed by the earnestness of the boy whom he met. This book was a cherished possession of Asutosh Mookerjee.

In 1876 he became a student of South Suburban School where Pandit Sivanath Sastri was the head master. The contributions of Sivanath Sastri to social thought and social history are very wellknown. Madhusudhan Das, who became famous in later years as the most popular leader in Orissa, used to teach him at home. In 1879 he passed the entrance examination of the University of Calcutta. He was second in the list in order of merit. He studied in the Presidency College from 1880 to 1885. He took the First Arts examination in 1881, occupying one of the top places. He had spells of serious illness in 1879 and 1881. After 1881 his health very much improved. One of his mathematical papers was published in the Cambridge *Messenger of Mathematics* in 1881. In it he gave an elegant new proof of the 25th proposition of the first book of Euclid. While he was yet an undergraduate he published his second mathematical paper in which he gave "Some Exten-

sions of the Theorem enunciated by Salmon". He took his B. A. degree in 1884, his M. A. in 1885. His subject was Mathematics. His first class (top of the list) in both these examinations showed that not only could he shine in the traditional way but what distinguished him from others was his remarkable originality as an investigator, evinced so early in his career. Even before he took his M. A. degree he wrote his third paper "a Note on Elliptic Functions". This paper has been referred to in Enneper's *Elliptische Functionen*. After he took his M. A. degree he published a paper "On the Differential Equation of a Trajectory". "In this paper he took into consideration the solution given by the Italian mathematician Mainardi. He showed that Mainardi's solution could be replaced by a pair of remarkably simple equations". Professor Forsyth has quoted these equations in his book on Differential Equations. His geometrical equation of the Mongian, given during the years 1887-1889, has been generally accepted. It has been quoted by Edwards in his book on Differential Calculus.²

Successive Vice-Chancellors referred in highly appreciative terms to the promising young mathematician. H. G. Reynolds said in his Convocation speech: "The senior wrangler of the year, if I may borrow the phrase from Cambridge, is Asutosh Mookerjee of the Presidency College who stands first in the list of B. A. graduates and is in receipt of the

² R. N. Sen's paper—Appendix A.

Ishan and Vizianagram scholarships and of the Hurrish Chander Prize". His successor C. P. Ilbert said in his Convocation address in 1885, "In the M. A. examination Mr. Asutosh Mookerjee to whose achievements my predecessor referred in 1884 retains his pre-eminence as a mathematician and for the sake of the profession to which I belong I am glad to see that he has devoted himself to the study of law and has carried off the gold medal recently offered for competition among law students by my friend Maharaja Sir Jotindro Mohun Tagore". In 1890 Sir Gurudas Banerjee said in his Convocation address, "In the abstruse region of mathematics, a distinguished young graduate has already commenced work, has already given fair earnest of a promising future".³

In his college days he did not take much part in social life. "Neither the debating society, nor the cricket field, nor the boat club attracted him and his one recreation was long walks which he kept till the end. Discarding the unnecessary chaddar was one of the achievements of Asutosh set in the college and his raiment was the plainest possible".⁴ In the Presidency College of those days there were teachers who created a tradition of inspiring teaching—C. H. Tawney, William Booth, F. J. Rowe, H. W. McCann, W. T. Webb, Pearycharan Sarkar, Prasanna Kumar Sarbadhikari, H. M. Percival and others. Among his contemporaries in the Presidency College—many of

³ *Convocation Addresses* Vol. II 1880-1898:

"Gooroodas Banerjee"—this was his own spelling.

⁴ D. P. Sarbadhikari—*Cal. Review* July 1924.

them were his seniors—mention should be made of Byomkesh Chakravarti, Asutosh Chaudhuri, Bhupendra Nath Bose, Heramba Chandra Maitra, Praphulla Chandra Ray, Suresh Prasad Sarvadhikari, Abdur Rahim and others. They were destined to be famous in later years in different walks of life. Narendra Nath Dutta, later famous as Swami Vivekananda, was for sometime a fellow-student of his at the Presidency College. One incident of his college life shows that young Asutosh, who was so much in earnest about his studies, possessed unusual organizing capacity. Dr. McCann, one of his teachers of mathematics, died suddenly in June, 1884. Asutosh Mookerjee, with the help of his fellow students, collected sufficient funds which enabled the Memorial Committee to put up a tablet in the college library in honour of his memory and to hand over to the University the balance of the collection which was sufficient for the award of an annual medal in his name to the graduate of the Presidency College who would obtain the highest marks in the University B. A. examination in mathematics. The speech of Asutosh Mookerjee on behalf of the students at the time of putting up the tablet attracted attention.

While he was still a student he learnt that there was a proposal to make fundamental changes in the Premchand Roychand studentship rules. Those who would be awarded the studentship in science should study in England for three years under distinguished teachers of international reputation. He sent a circular letter to all Fellows of the University under a pseu-

donym in which he advanced the following arguments against the proposal: The conservative section of the society would not like the idea. So its effect would be to deprive many good students belonging to conservative families of what was perhaps their due. The total expenditure of three years' stay in England would amount to Rs. 11,000. But the award would amount only to Rs. 6,200. How would a student, meritorious but poor, pay for himself? When he would return he would not get any well-equipped laboratory where he would be able to continue further studies. A case in point was that of Mr. A. C. Sen who was the best student in the agricultural college in which he read in England. But when he came back the vacant post in the Bombay Agricultural College was given to a British fellow student of his in England who had got one hundred marks less than him in the passing out examination in England. He was offered in compensation the post of a statutory civilian. If it was their intention to further scientific studies they could help the Indian Science Association of Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar.⁵ The arguments were very convincing and they were very effective. The proposed new conditions were not attached to the award.

He got the Premchand Roychand studentship, the coveted blue ribbon of university career in Calcutta, in 1886. The same year he also took the M. A. degree in another subject—Physics. He was the first student in the university who took the M. A. degree in two

⁵ *Asutosh Smriti Katha* by D. C. Sen.

subjects. He was specializing in mathematics and physics but he was always something more than a mere specialist. He had taken his Premchand Roychand studentship examination in pure mathematics, mixed mathematics and physics. Next year he submitted an application for permission to appear in the Premchand Roychand studentship examination again in three arts subjects. The Syndicate regretted their inability to give him this permission. His reading of history, philosophy and English literature was not desultory. He was prepared to stand the test of the most difficult examination of those days. He became a Fellow of Royal Astronomical Society in 1885, a Fellow of Edinburgh Royal Society, and a member of Asiatic Society of Calcutta in 1886.

An event of great significance in the career of Asutosh Mookerjee happened in 1887. Sir Charles Croft was the Director of Public Instruction. He told Rashbehari Ghose that he would like to see this promising young mathematician about whom he had heard so much. Asutosh Mookerjee therefore went to see him. They had a long talk. Sir Charles Croft was satisfied and offered him an appointment in the Presidency College. Asutosh Mookerjee wanted honourable terms of appointment which would mean that he would not be transferred from Calcutta. Transfer from Calcutta would put an end to research. He further wanted the same status and pay as European members of the Educational Service. Croft was very much surprised. He said the question of a transfer might not arise ; but how could he expect

the status and pay of European members of the educational service? It was an impossible demand. The young man quietly said that he was not a candidate for appointment. He was grateful to the Director of Public Instruction for taking an interest in his career. But he was reading law and he would prefer to join the bar. He had no desire to accept service on such terms.⁶ His father must have expressed his hearty approval of his son's decision. He had been in a similar situation twenty years before and he had made a similar decision. Truly, Asutosh Mookerjee was cast in the parental mould.

In India of those days a brilliant university career commanded great respect but the career of an academic did not provide the opportunities he wanted. He could have been a great teacher. He loved to teach. He could have been a great researcher. He could have established his school of mathematical physics. The idea perhaps continued to allure him. In the Indian Association for the cultivation of Science he delivered 12 lectures in 1887, 20 in 1888, 35 in 1889, 29 in 1890, 29 in 1891. Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, who founded the Indian Association, wanted this institution to encourage science learning, science teaching and scientific research. But, for the apathy of his wealthy countrymen and the indifference of the people from whom he expected support, the institution could not fulfil its promise. The sustained energy and devotion of the founder enabled the institution to

⁶ *Representative Indians* by L. M. Chatterjee and S. P. Mookerjee. *Sir Asutosh Mookerjee: A study* by P. C. Sinha.

survive. He had to depend upon honorary workers. His appeals year after year for the endowment of professorships were not responded to in the form of donation or subscription. Gurudas Banerjee said in 1906, on the occasion of the 29th annual meeting of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science over which Asutosh Mookerjee presided, "Many years ago when most of us here present scarcely knew his name, the illustrious founder and secretary of this institution, with that keen insight which characterised his mind, discovered unmistakable indications in Babu Asutosh Mookerjee of a brilliant future career . . . It was on Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar's invitation that Dr. Mookerjee delivered courses of lectures in higher mathematics in this hall which were listened to with profit by the M. A. students of Calcutta colleges including even the Presidency College".⁷ Mahendralal Sarkar could not create an endowed professorship for Asutosh Mookerjee and help him to found a new school of mathematical physics. After 1892 his practice in the High Court engrossed his attention and he could not continue his course of lectures at the Indian Association. In the list of honorary lecturers in higher mathematics we find Shyamadas Mookerjee and Mohendra Nath Roy lecturing in his stead at the Indian Association. In 1904, after the death of Mahendralal Sarkar, Asutosh said at the annual meeting of the Association, "One of the things which has caused the keenest regret in

⁷ Proceedings of Annual Meeting, Nov. 29, 1904 1906.

me is that during his life time I have not had sufficient opportunity to do for this Association, something that I could have done and I assure my friend (Dr. Amritalal Sarkar son of Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, who was now appointed the Hony. Secretary of the institution) that he can place implicit reliance upon my doing everything that I can to promote the welfare of this Association. I intend to resume the lectures which I used to deliver many years ago and I would be ready before long to address the students in this hall on mathematics". But he could not keep his promise. His preoccupations left him no time for active teaching work.

Asutosh Mookerjee said in 1920, "I began life as a research student in mathematics when research was practically unknown in this country and the ambition of my life was to be a research professor in my university. Mr. Justice Gurudas Banerjee who was then the Vice-Chancellor of this university (1890-92) made a desperate attempt to create a chair for me but such were the times that he failed to collect even a sum which would have yielded a modest income of Rs. 4,000/- a year which was all that he and I thought would be sufficient to maintain me as a research professor. The result was that I drifted into law".⁸ Mahendralal Sarkar was unable to secure endowments that could ensure his services as a teacher and research worker. Gurudas Banerjee could not create a research

⁸ *Representative Indians*—L. M. Chatterjee and S. P. Mookerjee.

professorship for him. In the words of Asutosh Mookerjee—"such were the times!"

Mahendralal Sarkar made a remark in 1872 about the atmosphere of apathy that prevailed in the field of research. Not a single individual was pursuing with steadiness any one branch of science. He said, "How is it that the Medical College has not yet produced a single student who has even thought of cultivating any of those sciences for which such ample foundation has been laid during his time in the college. The true cause lies in the fact of want of opportunity, want of means, want of encouragement and not in defective moral nature, nor in the easily spent precocity, nor in badly developed physique, nor in inadequate food". He could not kindle the enthusiasm he had hoped to create. As he said, "My political economy, however technically correct, does not appear to be practicable". There was no social consciousness which could favour organized research.

In 1886 Asutosh Mookerjee married Sm. Yogamāyā Devi, daughter of Pandit Ramnarayan Bhattacharya of Krishnagar. His younger brother Hemantakumar died suddenly in 1887 shortly after taking his B. A. degree. It was a great shock to his father who could not recover from it. His health began to decline. He died in 1889. In these circumstances young Asutosh Mookerjee had to think more about his profession and less about mathematical physics.

He passed his B. L. examination from City College in 1888. One of his teachers in the City College, in

the law department was S. P. Sinha, whom the British later made the first baronet from Bengal. He served his articles under Rashbehari Ghose and began his practice in the High Court from 31 August, 1888. A letter written by him to Gurudas Banerjee on 12 June, 1904 deserves to be quoted in this context. Asutosh Mookerjee was appointed a Puisne judge of the High Court in June 1904. He received a letter from Sir Gurudas Banerjee congratulating him on this appointment. He wrote in reply, "My dear Sir, Allow me to offer you my sincere thanks and deep gratitude for your kind congratulations and good wishes: they have to me a special value as coming from one who helped me most materially at the turning point of my career on the 25th March, 1887 and who has been since then the best of my friends". Again on the 30th June, 1904, he referred to Gurudas Banerjee as "one who had a considerable share in moulding my career".⁹

We do not know what turning point in his career is referred to in these letters. He could have been a teacher and research worker with very limited opportunities and there was the career of a lawyer open to him with its immense possibilities. All that we can guess is that Sir Gurudas possibly advised him to decide in favour of law. Gurudas Banerjee was himself a student of mathematics. He knew very well what this sacrifice meant for Asutosh Mookerjee. He therefore tried as Vice-Chancellor to create an opening

⁹ *Sir Gooroodas Banerjee* by Chunilal Bose, Appendix.

for him as a research professor and failed. After 1892 there was no choice. His name does not appear in the proceedings of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science until 1899. He was present there as a guest in 1899 at the annual meeting of the Association. He became a member of the Association in 1901. The lawyer had by then established himself in his profession and he could think of service to the cause of education in other ways. In 1901 it was announced in the annual meeting of the Association that the Hon'ble Dr. Asutosh Mookerjee and the Hon'ble Justice Gurudas Banerjee had each subscribed Rs. 1000/- in aid of the Victoria Professorship of the Association.

Asutosh Mookerjee had a genius for mathematics and there was a clear promise of great things to come. The remark which was made about a budding Lord Chancellor of England would not perhaps be inappropriate in this context. He was the Senior Wrangler of his year and it was said that he was doing very well at the bar and one day he might become the Lord Chancellor of England. His Cambridge friend remarked, "And if he is Lord Chancellor what is that to what he might have been if he had stuck to his career as a mathematician". This remark does not apply exactly in this form to Asutosh Mookerjee. First rate geniuses cannot, it is true, be suppressed or extinguished but of such geniuses there are very few in an age. But there are in every country, in every generation, young men who, though not geniuses, can do very valuable literary and scientific work if they get an

opportunity. They are guided by ordinary considerations which influence men viz. the prospect of pecuniary profit, social position and congenial work. It was a gain rather than a loss to his country when he gave up the prospect of success as a teacher and research worker, became a lawyer, an active member of the senate and syndicate of the University of Calcutta with the determination to do all that he could for the spread of higher education and advancement of research.

Between 1888 when he began his career as lawyer in the High Court and 1904 when he became a judge of the High Court of Calcutta his activities were of a varied kind. He became a Fellow of the Calcutta University on 16 January 1889, a member of the syndicate in March the same year. He became a fellow of *Société de Physique* of France, of the Mathematical Society of Palermo in 1890, and a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1893. His book *Geometry of Conics* was published in 1893. He became a Doctor of Law in 1894, Tagore Law Professor in 1898. His book on the *Law of Perpetuities* was published the same year. In 1899 he was elected a member of the Bengal Legislative Council as a representative of the University of Calcutta.



CHAPTER II

THE LEGISLATURE AND THE CORPORATION OF CALCUTTA 1899-1904

After his election to the Bengal Legislative Council Asutosh Mookerjee became conspicuous for his opposition to the notorious Mackenzie Bill. Along with Surendranath Banerjee he opposed the bill almost clause by clause. They shared the feeling that it was destructive of the spirit of municipal self-government. It wanted to safeguard commercial interests by establishing complete official control over the Corporation of Calcutta. The government argument was that European commercial interests had created modern Calcutta. It was pointed out by the Indian spokesmen that Europeans owned 12·6 p.c. of the assessable property and paid 18·3 per cent of the rates. Hindus owned 60·4 p.c. of assessable property and paid 59·5 per cent of the rates. The government spokesman counterargued that this was not the whole truth. The value of machinery was not assessed. Calcutta, as a trade centre, represented jute interests and the whole export trade of northern India. Commerce paid license tax. The rates paid by the Port Commissioners should also be taken into account. But for commerce the value of lands and buildings would dwindle away to nothing. "What is Hindu property against all this?"

The debate lasted eleven days. Asutosh Mookerjee criticised without reserve the provisions of the bill.

He described it as "a measure intended to mutilate, if not to destroy, the form of municipal government which has prevailed in the capital of the Indian empire . . . the bill has my unqualified disapproval". He argued that before a bill of such magnitude was introduced an independent commission of enquiry should have been appointed in which the public might repose implicit confidence. He criticised the fundamental principle of three co-ordinate authorities—the Corporation for purposes of deliberating, the Chairman for purposes of executive government and interposed between the two a General Committee. Not a few of the provisions were, according to him, inconsistent with the first principles of jurisprudence. The arbitrary system of assessment which it provided was inconsistent with the first notions of political economy. Variations from the previous land acquisition act were, according to him, indefensible in principle. They would foster mischievous litigation. The member in charge of the bill said that the function of the Council was to carry out the mandate of the government of the day when the principle of any proposed measure of legislation had been approved by the government. He retorted, "I have made none the custodian of my conscience and so long as I have the honour of a seat in the Council it will be my duty to advise the Council to the best of my ability and judgment, regardless of what this or that party may approve or disapprove".

Another statement made by him in the course of this debate deserves to be noticed. Opposing the payment of fees for attendance in meetings of the Corpora-

tion he said, "There is still considerable public spirit in this country . . . week after week, month after month, very arduous and useful work is carried on in the University by members, European and Indian, official and nonofficial, who would consider it a grievous insult if they were offered any remuneration for their services . . . I decline to believe that the incentive of fees is necessary to induce any member of the educated Hindu community to interest himself in matters municipal . . . absolutely no case has been made out that the public spirit of the latter has to be whetted by the sight of gold".

His opposition to the bill was only less vehement than that of Surendranath Banerjee. But he did not burn his boats as Surendranath Banerjee did. This Act officialised the Corporation. The elected members were numerically on an equal footing with the nominated members. The Chairman was an official. This ensured a standing majority to the official bloc. With a view perhaps to making public criticism lose some of its force the Government nominated Asutosh Mookerjee one of the Commissioners of the Corporation.

In the Corporation of Calcutta he was not so uniformly regular in his attendance as in the University Senate and Syndicate. But he was usually present and he never gave a silent vote on controversial matters. He was elected a member of the General Committee. In 1903 he was recommended by the Corporation for nomination to a seat on the Bengal Council. The rate payers of Bhowanipore owe to him the change of

the name Strand Road, Bhowanipore to Harish Chatterjee street. He supported Maulvi Agha Muhammad Musa in his proposal to change the name of Komedan Bagan Lane to Ripon Street. He spoke frequently on procedural matters and interested himself in complicated legal questions affecting the Corporation. He frequently asked questions in the interest of rate-payers about the closing of roads for long periods for repair works, drainage works, damage done to buildings on account of sewer works and other affairs of this big city. He was quite a busy Councillor.

In the Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal during the years 1899 to 1904 he spoke very effectively on the Mackenzie Bill of 1899, on the Bengal financial estimates for 1900-1901, 1902-1903, 1903-1904, 1904-1905. His remarks on the financial estimates were made mainly on the heads—Education, Law and Justice.

On the budget estimates for 1900-1901 he took care to point out that there was a steady and marked decrease in the amount devoted to the maintenance of Government Arts Colleges. In 1896-97 the amount spent by Government was Rs. 5,24,000/-, in 1897-98 Rs. 5,12,000/-, in 1898-99 Rs. 4,94,000/-, in 1899-1900 Rs. 4,75,000/-. Income derived from fees during these years steadily increased from Rs. 1,67,000/- to Rs. 1,78,000/- in 1897-98, Rs. 1,88,000/- in 1898-99 and reached the figure Rs. 2,13,000/- in 1899-1900. He said, "I have noticed with deepest concern the policy of retrenchment. Retrenchment necessarily implies the employment of inferior agency or of competent persons

upon inadequate salary. In education, if nowhere else, we must avail ourselves of the services of the very best men”.

In the debate on the financial statement of 1902-1903 he said, “Liberal grants have been made from time to time for improving the status of *Munsiffs* and Deputy-magistrates and I am glad that in the present budget Rs. 30,000/- has been set apart for improving the status of Subdeputy Collectors. Now that the Government has the means at its disposal I trust an endeavour will be made to raise the status of the officers of the education department, especially in its provincial and subordinate branches. The education department has been systematically ignored, its interests have been subordinated to that of the departments of the public service and though the department was re-organised some years ago, I regret to say that the result shows that the more appropriate expression would be “disorganized”. Our distinguished graduates prefer the judicial and executive branches of the service. The initial pay they receive is higher and promotion too is much more rapid. The status of the members of the Provincial Educational Service ought not to be lower than that of the Subordinate Judicial and Executive services. One concrete illustration may not be unwelcome. Take for example the present Principal of the Sanskrit College. He is a scholar of European reputation, pre-eminent in his own department of study but though he has served Government for twenty-five years, such is the constitution of the department that he is still in the grade of Rs. 300/-

and has been there for many years past. There are pupils of this distinguished Professor who have entered government service later as Deputy Magistrates and are paid at least twice as much as he receives. These are anomalies which may be and should be avoided.

"My Honourable friends may, perhaps, be surprised to hear that the government school teachers are employed on Rs. 20/- a month and these are the teachers who impart instruction to beginners in a difficult foreign language. No doubt the education of our boys has gone from bad to worse. We have indeed made education cheap but we have not cared for its quality.

"I would like for a moment to dwell on the distinction between the Superior and Provincial services. That distinction to my mind is arbitrary and I cannot discover that it is based on any rational principle. You take two equally distinguished graduates, say from Oxford and place them one in the Superior and the other in the Provincial service. You place them both perhaps in the same college. The work you set them to do is precisely of the same character; only when you come to the question of remuneration you pay the one just twice as much as you pay the other. This is an anomaly which, I confess, I am not acute enough to be able to justify".

In the debate on the provincial financial statement 1903-1904 he confined his remarks to education. He said, "Last year the Government of India found it possible to place at the disposal of the Government of Bengal a sum of ten lakhs of rupees to be spent for

educational purposes. I pressed upon the notice of Government the necessity of improving the status of educational officers but I was assured that the claims of primary education were paramount. But I find that a sum of over five lakhs of rupees has actually been saved out of the imperial grant of ten lakhs. But this is not all. Part at least of imperial grant of ten lakhs has been unquestionably spent for ordinary purposes which ought to have been met out of ordinary provincial grant for education—purchase of rice for boys of Alipore Reformatory School, gas lights in the Eden Hindu Hostel, construction of bookshelves in the library of the Patna College. I maintain that the grant of ten lakhs ought not to induce the Government of Bengal to reduce the normal grant for education.

“When it is found that the paramount claims of primary education would not absorb the whole of the ten lakhs, a portion at any rate of the surplus might have been applied for the improvement of the status of the educational service. The Honble Member in charge of education last year said that the work of a member of the educational service cannot be compared as regards difficulty, anxiety and responsibility with that of an officer of the judicial or magisterial service. So far back as 1854 Sir Charles Wood, in the great education despatch of 1854 said, “Our wish is that the profession of school masters may for the future afford inducements to the natives of India, such as are held out in other branches of the public service . . . I fervently hope, Sir, we shall hear no longer, not at any rate in this Council, that the work of a

member of the educational service is less responsible than the work of a member of the Provincial judicial or Executive service and that consequently his remuneration ought to be less.

I have in my hands a circular marked 'confidential'. Why anything in matters educational should be labelled 'confidential' I cannot conceive except it be this that it is obviously unreasonable and will not stand the test of criticism".

On the Bengal financial statement, 1904-1905, he made a very effective speech on education. He made a pointed reference to the subject of the reduction of government scholarships both in number and amount. He regarded it as a matter of the deepest regret, especially so because there was no justification for the course adopted. On behalf of the Government it was pointed out that the amount which was spent on junior and senior scholarships exceeded the two per cent limit fixed by the Hunter Commission on education. He said, "I will not pause to enquire by whom this brilliant but somewhat belated discovery has been made. Are we sure that all the other recommendations of the famous commission have been religiously observed and followed? If the recommendation of the Commission has been ignored for twenty years it might well have been allowed to be buried and forgotten for a longer period. If it was obligatory upon the government to act up to this particular recommendation the education expenditure should have been so increased and regulated as to allow the number and value of scholarships to con-

tinue according to the scale which has hitherto prevailed. The amount set free by this reduction (a belated and brilliant discovery) was only Rs. 14,376 per annum and had been allotted for the creation of additional primary scholarships. The hardship caused by this reduction was substantial. Under the old system an indigent student who obtained a first grade junior scholarship of Rs. 20/- a month might easily be educated at the Presidency College where the college fee for the scholarship holder was only Rs. 10/- leaving a sum of Rs. 10/- for the maintenance of the student. The present system would leave only Rs. 6/-. Third grade scholarships were reduced from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 8/-. I asked the government whether the college fee should not be reduced for those who receive stipends and I was told in reply that no change could be made. This declaration is inconsistent with the avowed policy of the government to encourage education, especially among students of ability and distinction, but of limited means".

His father had depended on merit scholarships for his studies and his maintenance in Calcutta in his student days. He therefore felt what this reduction of two or four rupees would mean to poor but meritorious students. But an alien bureaucracy could not be expected to have that sympathy which should influence administration.

In the Bengal legislative Council he was a very active member. He asked questions on various matters of public interest. He made a strong plea in favour of a grant to the city of Calcutta from the customs

and excise duties on the analogy of exchequer grant to the London County Council. He must have felt justified in making this claim in view of what had been said by the government spokesman on the Mackenzie Bill in favour of European trade interests in Calcutta. In 1903 he was the representative of the Corporation of Calcutta on the Bengal Legislative Council.

He was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council early in 1904 by the non-official members of the Bengal Legislature. There his short term was marked by very effective speeches on the Transfer of Property Amendment bill, Indian Universities Bill, Official Secrets Bill and on the Financial Statement. He shared with G. K. Gokhale the burden of the hard fight on the Universities Bill. Normally, throughout a marathon debate, G. K. Gokhale, Bipin Krishna Bose, Nawab Sayyid Muhammed, Rai Sri Ram Bahadur were with him. These five Indian members had arrayed against them 13 European members and 4 Indian members in most of the divisions. Asutosh Mookerjee's main contention was that "We have reached the ebb tide of high education not because the Senates are inefficient but because the Government has starved its colleges and weakened its education department".

His part in the discussion of Indian Financial Statement for 1904-1905 deserves to be remembered. He shared with our nationalist school of thought their views on the economic consequences of British rule in India. Excerpts from his speech of 30th March 1904

will best illustrate his opposition to the existing financial principles and practices—"An artificial stability of exchange has been productive of hardship to the agricultural classes of the country. I shall now proceed with the second of the two causes of the surplus, namely, increased taxation. The increase of taxation from 1883-'84 upto the last year, when a portion of the income tax and the duty on salt were remitted, to which I shall refer presently, may be distributed under the following heads: (1) income tax (2) duty on petroleum (3) enhancement of duty on salt (4) increase of duty on imported spirits (5) general import duties (6) import duty on cotton goods (7) increase of Kohat salt duty (8) reimposition of the patwari cess (9) excise duty on cotton goods (10) excise. The total increase of taxation on all these heads is about 8·78 lakhs annually. If from this we deduct the amount remitted of the salt duty and the income tax, the amount will be reduced by 2·08 lakhs ; in other words the net increase of taxation from 1883-'84 onwards has been 6,70 lakhs a year ; and I venture to hope that when we have a succession of years of surplus, it is not quite unreasonable to ask the government to consider whether any of the taxes imposed in recent years may not be reduced or if possible, remitted. I think an examination of our financial history will prove conclusively that additional taxation has been imposed from time to time upon grounds specified on the occasion. I venture to point out that it is by no means prudent or desirable to keep a tax after the necessity for its initial imposition has ceased to exist. It is

quite open to the Government to increase its expenditure indefinitely and if the process is followed without limit or restraint there will be no chance of the recently imposed taxes being diminished or withdrawn . . . the income tax, as levied in the country is extremely unequal in its incidence . . . the accurate determination of the incidence of taxation in this country which I have suggested the Government should undertake assumes great importance from another practical point of view . . . It is found at the time of every famine of any intensity that the power of resistance of poorer or agricultural classes of the community is almost infinitesimal. . . . It may no doubt be suggested that this condition of utter helplessness on the part of the agricultural classes is traceable in some measure to their improvidence as also to the effect of loans at usurious rates of interest. The operation of those causes will no doubt be practically removed by the establishment of cooperative credit societies and the restriction placed upon the right of alienation of land. But I venture to point out that the effect of the reforms thus introduced will be materially strengthened if an investigation were undertaken to determine the incidence of taxation upon the agricultural classes which can only be done effectively after we have fuller and more improved agricultural statistics than the Government seems to possess at the present moment. This lamentable want of resisting capacity on the part of the agricultural classes is traceable, in considerable measure, at any rate, to the great pressure of taxation upon members of that class.

It seems to be somewhat anomalous that the Government should not possess full and accurate statistics upon this matter and that at the same time confident declaration should be made on behalf of the Government that India is one of the most lightly taxed countries in the world and that there is no relation between taxation and famine in the country.

I wish to make a reference to the recurring and perplexing question of military expenditure. It is a steadily, rapidly, but necessarily growing burden on our finances. What causes me the utmost disappointment is what I must plainly describe as an element of unfairness which comes in when any question arises as to the mode of apportionment of military expenditure between the Indian and British exchequer. This matter was never more painfully evident than recently with reference to the increase of pay of the British soldier. The whole question was whether the initial annual charge of £220,000 and the ultimate annual charge of £786,000, rendered necessary by the decision of His Majesty's Government to raise the pay of the British army, could be rightly charged upon the revenues of India. It deeply pains me to say that the Lord Chief Justice of England as arbitrator, should have determined that the whole of the additional pay issued in India from the 1st April, 1904 should be borne by the revenues of India. As a consequence our budget is weighted on the expenditure side, with a burden of £493,900 . . . The government of Marquis of Ripon protested, with only partial success against the cost of the Egyptian expedition being thrown

upon the Indian revenues. The very next year the Government of the same Viceroy protested against the Indian revenues being burdened with non-effective military charges, in other words, charges incurred for retiring pay and pensions and other expenses of that nature, arising in respect of his Majesty's forces serving in India.

"It was pointed out that the system under which the capitalised value of the pensions was paid by the Indian to the English treasury was intolerable in as much as under its operation charges were thrown upon the Indian revenues in an extremely uncertain manner and created a financial position of great embarrassment. It was added that when charges so incalculable and wholly beyond control were thus suddenly thrown upon the revenues, all efforts to secure a proper equilibrium of revenue and expenditure must necessarily be defeated. This remonstrance proved wholly ineffectual. The government of Lord Elgin protested against Indian revenues being used to defray any of the expenses of the Indian contingent sent to Suakin, the decision was equally unfavourable to the interest of India. My Lord, the real truth of the matter seems to be that although successive Viceroys have demanded that England should show that her treatment of India in this matter has been just and considerate, the authorities in England have been impervious to reason and remonstrance. It cannot surely be in consonance with justice or sound imperial policy that the wealthy and dominant race should relieve itself of charges at the expense of the poor and subject race, if the

smallest doubt be thrown on the equity of such a proceeding”.

He asked some very important questions during his short tenure as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council. In the Legislative Department Proceedings of March 1904 (Nos. 18-20) we find that he asked the following questions and elicited replies which proved that the questions were perhaps inconvenient.

1. Will the Government be pleased to state why the Report of the Police Commission has not yet been published? Whether it is intended to publish it, if so when?

Reply: The publication of the report has been deferred under the orders of the Secretary of State for India.

It may not be out of place to mention that A. H. L. Fraser, President of the Police Commission, expressed certain views on provincial re-adjustment which could not perhaps be published. He wrote, “The Marathas of Poona are most disloyal. The Marathas of Berar and Nagpur are at present not only not under the influence of Poona Brahmans but antagonistic to them in interest. To join them to Bombay would be to consolidate the Maratha race, to identify its various sections in interest and to introduce a serious difficulty and danger into Indian administration” (Curzon papers). The question of Provincial re-adjustment was being considered on these lines. This was a prelude to the Partition of Bengal.

Reference :

1. Minutes and Proceedings of the Corporation of Calcutta and Special Committees 1900—1904.
2. Proceedings of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal 1899—1903.
3. Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of Governor-General of India assembled for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations—1904.
4. *Curzon's Speeches*—Vol. III (Asutosh Collection).

CHAPTER III

LAWYER, JURIST AND JUDGE

Asutosh Mookerjee's first choice of a profession was that of a teacher and research worker. He felt the breath of a genuine intellectual urge. But the academic set-up was very unsuitable. He, therefore, drifted into law. This profession was his second choice. But it demanded great intellectual vitality. The path of law was hard walking. With a resolute will, prodigious industry and vast learning he very soon made a mark in the profession. Among the giants of the Calcutta High Court bar of those days mention may be made of Woodroffe, Jackson, Paul and Garth, W. C. Banerjee, T. N. Palit, Rashbehari Ghose and Gurudas Banerjee. The government letter which suggested his appointment as a High Court Judge in 1904 summed up the impression which he had created in the following words: "Dr. Mukherjee is noted at the bar for the conciseness of his arguments and his capacity for seizing the essential points of a case." The letter refers in appreciative terms to his remarkable industry and learning. He could have been at the top of his profession if he had not been raised to the bench. He did not go out for professional success alone with its social and economic premiums.

Busy professional work did not put a check upon his scholastic pursuits. But the place of mathematics was now taken by law. His appointment as Tagore

Law Professor in 1898 was regarded as a very natural recognition of his claims as a learned Jurist. This was the highest reward which a jurist in India could expect. The list of distinguished Tagore Law Professors begins with Herbert Cowell. Rashbehari Ghosh was Tagore Law Professor in 1876, Gurudas Banerjee in 1878. J. G. Woodroffe was Asutosh Mookerjee's immediate predecessor. His successor was F. Peacock. On the roll of Tagore Law Professors we find many names that are known internationally and their works adorn the law libraries of the world.

As Tagore Law Professor he delivered in 1898 twelve lectures on the Law of Prepetuities in British India. The Law of Perpetuities, as a branch of the law of property, had as its object restraint on the creation of future conditional interests, aiming also at the prevention of the non-alienation of property. His lectures on the subject were marked by thoroughness of investigation, a characteristic of his scholarship. He discussed the subject in all its ramifications. He ended his first lecture with the following observation: "It will be necessary, as you proceed, to examine cautiously even the opinions of eminent judges in a spirit of criticism which will be possibly unbecoming in other branches of law". He first spoke on the law of perpetuities—its nature and place in jurisprudence. He then discussed the rule against Perpetuities—its origin and history in English Law, its history in Indian Law. His fourth lecture was on the rule against perpetuities, its scope and corollaries. His fifth lecture was on the interests affected by the rule against perpetuities affect-

ing limitations to classes and limitations to a series. Lecture VII was also on rule against perpetuities affecting limitations to classes and limitations to a series. Lecture VIII was on the rule against perpetuities as it affects powers. Lecturer IX was on the rule against perpetuities in relation to principles of construction ; Lecture X on religious and charitable trusts, lecture XI on accumulations and Lecture XII on restraints on the alienation of property.

In the context of the rule against perpetuities—its history in Indian Law—he said, “You will not forget that the system of Hindu Law, as it has reached us, is not and does not profess to be exhaustive ; it is a system which contains within itself the elements of experience in which new customs and new propositions not repugnant to the old law may engrafted upon it from time to time, as the change of circumstances and the progress of society imperiously demand.”

Manu says, “A king who knows the saered law must enquire into the laws of caste, of districts, of guilds and of families and then settle the peculiar law of each.

“What may have been practised by the virtuous, by such twice-born men as are devoted to the law that he shall establish as law, if it be not opposed to the customs of countries, families and castes.

“Brihaspati is more emphatic still: A decision must not be made solely by having recourse to the letter of written codes ; since if no decision were made according to the reason of the law or according to

the immemorial usage, there might be a failure of justice.

“This is nothing more than the process of judicial legislation, which is one of the recognised sources of law in many civilized states.”

In his foreword to the second edition of the *Principles of the Hindu Law of Inheritance* by Raj Kumar Sarvadhikari, revised by Jyotiprasad Sarvadhikari, Asutosh Mookerjee quoted with approval the following statement on the character of Hindu Law—“The ball has gone on rolling and each succeeding legislator—from the great anchorite of Kalyana to the philosophic lawyer of Triveni—has been adding impetus by the force of his genius to its never-ceasing motion.”

The growth of his mind as a jurist is a very illuminating chapter of his life history. In his address on the study of law on the inauguration of the department of legal studies in the Baneres Hindu University on the 4th August 1923, he said, “Lucubrations of twenty years will do little more than conduct us to the vestibule of the temple ; and an equal period may well be devoted to exploring the recesses.” To him “Law is essentially a science of principles.” He wanted its votaries to be conducted down the historic path of social and legal evolution. “The labyrinth,” as he advised students, “was to be penetrated by skill and mastered by a frequent survey of landmarks.”

As a judge of the High Court of Calcutta he brought to the service of law his inexhaustible energy, devotion, erudition and “that highest kind of integrity

—the integrity of scholarship.” The series of judgments which began in June 1904 and continued until his retirement on the 31st December, 1923 have left the mark of his personality on the legal history of India. His awareness of the significance of the past as also his consciousness of the fact that law was made for man and not men for law deserves to be noticed in this context. He has therefore been described as a historical and sociological jurist. He said at Benares in 1923, “Law is coeval with society. It has adapted itself notwithstanding all the imperfections of its mode of development through ages, to all the wonderful complications of modern life.”

We would try to show how his mind worked in the field of law by referring to some of his important judgments. No attempt could possibly be made to treat the subject exhaustively, nor from the nature of it could chronological sequence be observed.

His judgment in the case of Bhupatinath Smriti-tirtha vs. Ram lal Maitra (I.L. R. 37 Cal. 128) illustrates how from a study of ancient texts and old law givers of India he could make a distinction between the spiritual and legal aspects of an idol. As he put it in legal terminology. “a Hindu deity, as a Corporation Sole must be distinguished from other Corporations Sole by the fact that it is a juridical person with a limited legal capacity. According to the directions of the testator certain properties were to be placed in the hands of certain person who were to receive certain payments and who were to put an image of goddess Kali in a temple and devote the surplus income to the

worship of this goddess. The gift, according to him, was valid. But property, according to him, could belong to an idol only in the ideal sense. In the case of Monhur Mukherjee vs. Raja Peary Mohan Mukherjee (24 C.W.N. 478) he made a study of a religious trust. According to him, a Hindu deity occupied the position of an infant in law, with the government, as in the case of all infants, as the constitutional protector. He brought in the analogy of English law in the case of charitable corporation. In the case of Rajani Nath Das vs. Nitai Chand Dey (I.L.R. 48 Cal. 64 3) he held that "the illegitimate son of a Sudra is entitled to a share of the inheritance provided that his mother was in the continuous and exclusive keeping of his father and he is not the fruit of an adulterous or an incestuous intercourse." This was a modern interpretation of Manu.

He had an extensive view of written law from Roman times to its recent development in modern times. He took cognisance of the decisions of American judges because he felt that he could not be oblivious of the fact that commercial and industrial development of America would naturally react upon law and administration of justice in other progressive countries. It has, therefore, been said that his judgments were "a repository of all the cases that might possibly have a bearing on the question at issue." He told the Benares department of legal studies, that the Indian student of law must undertake a far more comprehensive course of study than is customary for the student of law under other systems. He must

learn Hindu and Muhammedan law. They are two fundamentally different types. He must have a full acquaintance with the legislative output of the active Indian legislature. The imperfections of Indian codified law would compel him to acquire a full knowledge of the principles of justice, equity and good conscience. The Indian student must also make an intelligent study of the principles of English law which have penetrated many Indian legislative enactments. He must also study the development of English law in England as also in other progressive surroundings.

His sense of history stood him in very good stead in some of his famous decisions. In the case of *Pulin Das vs. King Emperor* (15 C.L. J. 517) the question was raised about the validity of the creation of a Lieutenant Governorship by mere proclamation without preliminary legislation in Eastern Bengal and Assam. He opined that even if the procedure was illegal the proceedings were started by *de facto* local government. The *de facto* doctrine operated "The acts of officers *de facto* performed by them within the scope of their official capacity in the interest of the public or third persons and not for their own benefit are generally as valid and binding as if they were the officers *de jure*." He gave illustrations from the history of England. In the days of Edward IV the previous Henrys of Lancaster were regarded as usurpers but they were in their days Kings *de facto* and treasons against them were punished under Edward IV. Under the Commonwealth and Protectorate Sir Mathew Hale acted as the Judge of the Common Bench and adjudged

cases involving civil liberty as also property. The validity of those judgments was never called in question.

In the case of the Legal Remembrancer vs. Matilal Ghose (17 C.W.N. 1253) he said that though the High Court was a Court of Record it could not issue a rule for a writ of attachment on a summary proceeding for contempt of the Magistrate's Court at Barisal. In this connection he reviewed the history of the origin and growth of Sadar Dewani Adalat and Sadar Nizamat Adalat and took care to point out that the Sadar Dewani Adalat was a court of record but the Sadar Nizamat Adalat was not so. In the Sadar Nizamat Adalat papers there was no case for punishment for contempt of a subordinate criminal court. According to him the power of the old King's Bench to punish by attachment contempt of inferior courts was based upon historical considerations of a special character which did not apply to the Supreme court or its successor, the High Court. The power to punish a contempt vested only in the court whose authority was thus challenged.

The doctrine of election of remedies in the case of Musammat Golab Koer vs. Bahadur Shah (13 C.W.N. 1197) was very effectively propounded by him. A consent decree was obtained by fraud. Application was made for review and it was dismissed. A regular suit was then instituted. Justice Mookerjee emphasised the principle that election once made was finally made, did not apply. It would not bar a regular suit. In the case of Kalyan Singh vs. Ram Golam Singh

(31 C.L.J. 48) he said very emphatically "It would constitute a just reproach to the administration of justice by this court if a litigant was sent from post to pillar and from pillar to post without even ultimately obtaining a hearing on the merits of the case."

His learned judgment in the case of Balbahadur vs. Barkat Ali (11 C.W.N. 85) is cited on the law of water courses and riparian rights. An impressive array of references to works on water courses and water rights supported the principles pronounced by him.

He did not cite cases with a view to saving himself the trouble of analysing and thinking. He thought of precedents because there was "a universal sense of justice which urges that all men are properly to be treated alike in like circumstances." He did not want to make a parade of his judicial learning. It came to him very naturally. He was also of the view that law must be administered as it existed with its limitations. In Regina Guha's case he said, "It is impossible for us to hold that on the law as it stands women are entitled to the ranks of the legal profession. Our duty as judges of this court is strictly limited to a declaration of the law as it is. Whether any change will be wise or expedient is a question for the legislature."

As a judge he had to decide not only civil cases but criminal cases also. "He had the antennae indispensable for great judges in criminal cases." In a criminal case under Newspaper Incitement to Offence Act VII of 1908—Sarat Chandra vs. K. E. (12 C.L.J. 294) he pointed out that if *Palli Chitra* could be consi-

dered to be a newspaper "one might as well take an issue of the *Nineteenth Century* or *Contemporary Review*, pick up a solitary passage or paragraph which may be interpreted as containing public news or comments on public news and then maintain that the periodical is a newspaper."

In the famous Amrita Bazar Patrika contempt case (C.W.N. 1253) the editorial comments made in connection with the Barisal conspiracy case contained allegations against the investigating public officials. This was described as a contempt of court. Asutosh Mookerjee wrote in his judgment: "I must emphatically repudiate the astonishing proposition that the Criminal Investigation Department . . . is the prosecutor in the criminal case before the court of the Magistrate at Barisal . . . there has been a tendency in the course of the argument to identify the criminal investigation department with the local government. A plain reading of the articles amply justifies the view that the writer had no motive or intention to embarrass the government."

The editor, printer and publisher of this newspaper were charged with contumacious conduct for another article in which they printed and published the following statement—"Something like consternation prevails on account of the proposed new constitution of the appellate branch of the Calcutta High Court before which appeals against the awards of the Improvement Trust are to be heard . . . the withdrawal of Sir Asutosh has given rise to rather unsavoury impressions in the public mind, since this proposed

arrangement is to follow close on the heels of his judgement in the case of Improvement Trust vs. Chandra Kanta Ghose. The Special Bench was composed of five judges including Justice Mookerjee. He took pains to point out that the facts were not correct and the argument on behalf of the editor, printer and publisher that the English judges who were landless did not understand local conditions was most emphatically repudiated by him. He observed that the judges were not influenced by a class outlook. This observation might appear to be much too lofty and sublime now a days. There are many people who may be inclined to think that such ethical mentality is a very difficult human achievement.

In the case of Emperor vs. Upendra (21 C.L.J. 377) he recorded in his decision a very important point in favour of the accused in a criminal case. He said, "I wish to dissociate myself from the proposition that the mere fact that the counsel for the accused has failed to present to court a particular aspect of the case can justify an omission on the part of the judge to draw the attention of the jury to what appears to be possible answer of the charge against the accused even on the prosecution evidence. It would be the duty of the judge to draw the attention of the Jury to such possible view of the case on the evidence."

In the celebrated Mussalmanpara Bomb Case (Emperor vs. Nagendra 19th C. W. N. 923) he delivered a short Judgment. "I am strongly convinced of the absolute innocence of the accused. My deliberate conclusion is that the endeavour made to

establish a connection between this innocent lad and a dastardly crime, by means of evidence, tainted in a large measure by manifest untruths and manufactured incidents has been completely unsuccessful". It was a very sensational case and the judgment echoed and re-echoed throughout the country.

In *Amritlal Bose vs. the Corporation of Calcutta* he clearly distinguished a tort from a crime—whether it is in its nature civil or criminal or quasi civil or quasi criminal. He said, "The fundamental distinction between a tort and a crime cannot be ignored or rejected and leads inevitably to the position that while in a civil suit for damages, however numerous the wrongdoers, the plaintiff is to be compensated for his loss only once, in a criminal proceeding where each wrongdoer is as guilty as though the others were not guilty also the full penalty must be inflicted on each precisely as if he had committed the crime unaided. Indeed from the point of view of criminal jurisprudence the circumstance that the wrongdoer had participants in the commission of the crime may sometimes make his position worse. . . . the essence of the matter is that here the proceeding has been instituted not to indemnify a person to the extent of the loss he may have suffered from a wrongful act but to inflict the punishment on the wrongdoer for the act which the government deems injurious to the public at large. I do not deny that it is open to the legislature to depart from this fundamental principle . . . — — — that where a particular offence has been committed by several persons jointly, one collective fine shall be

inflicted upon them jointly but in my opinion the legislative intent to depart from what I cannot but consider as a fundamental principle of criminal jurisprudence must be established beyond all reasonable doubts."

In *Emperor vs. Barendra*, perhaps, the last important case he tried before his retirement, he raised the question of professional ethics. "It is not an advocate's duty who has lost faith in the case he has been engaged to support to approach the trial judge and to apprise him that in his opinion the man whose fate has been left in his care has no defence to make and if as a trial judge he had been placed in such a predicament he would, without hesitation, have reported the counsel concerned to the Chief Justice for disciplinary action and would have asked to be relieved of the duty of participating in the trial and of passing sentence upon a man whose counsel has previously assured him that there was no defence to make." The defence counsel, the judge, the advocate-general, as also the bar and the bench must have felt that the stricture was more than justified.

He took a very noble view of the legal profession and of the lawyer's role in society. He said at the time of his retirement: "Notwithstanding diligent study of the science of law for more than a third of a century I have now a more profound and abiding sense of ignorance than oppressed me in the beginning of my career." In his celebrated speech of 4th August 1923 he remarked, "Edmund Burke traced the intractable spirit of the American colonists to the

growth of their system of education which included an extensive study of law . . . "In no country perhaps in the world is the law so general a study. The profession itself is numerous and powerful and in most provinces takes the lead. The greater number of deputies sent to the Congress are lawyers. I hear that they have sold nearly as many Blackstone's commentaries in America as in England. The study of the law makes men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defence, full of resources." He also quoted De Tocqueville in this context: "By birth and interest lawyers belong to the people; by habit and taste to the aristocracy, and they may be looked upon as the natural bond and connecting link of the two great classes of society."

When he retired from the High Court there was reference to the enormous mass of judicial decisions which emanated from him, to the fact that he settled doubtful points and struck a new vein in the jurisprudence of the country. "In the maze and labyrinth of adjudged cases you ever walked with a firm step", said a distinguished lawyer at the time of his retirement. When he was forty years old he began his career as a Judge. One of his senior colleagues—Justice Rampini—told him that his enthusiasm would perhaps abate with advancing years. He is reported to have said in reply that he would not be justified in continuing as a judge if his enthusiasm for doing justice, would diminish and his capacity for work decline. He maintained till his retirement six months before it was due his unbounded zeal for doing jus-

tice. He said at the time of his retirement: "I have tried uniformly to keep wide open the gates of justice so that every litigant who considered rightly or wrongly that he had a grievance might not have his case summarily rejected and might have the fullest opportunity to place his case fully on the merits before the highest tribunal." He had an inclination to delve deep. Whenever possible he would, with his research-oriented mind, go to the original sources. In a case concerning hindus he would try to find out in what way a hindu court of justice would have decided it. But he would take a broader view. In a case where the question was whether a hindu widow had exceeded her power when she raised a fund by the grant of permanent leases with a view to digging and consecrating a tank he went to original writings of ancient hindu lawmakers and made a decision in support of her claim.

His judgments, as Dawson Miller, Chief Justice of Patna High Court, said, had only to be quoted to command universal respect. In this field he was a master craftsman and not a creative genius. But as a distinguished lawyer writes, "the empirical attitude of most of the judges of today and the hand to mouth habit of self-complacent functional judges of these days make one feel nostalgic about the breadth of broad spaces and glowing peaks in the judgments of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee." His judgments were masterful expositions of law on every subject with which they dealt. His stand against executive high handedness also deserves to be noticed as also his insistence

that there must be procedural justice particularly in state prosecutions. He was in the fullest sense a learned judge and the atmosphere of the High Court in those days was conducive to judicial learning. "Few men have written so faultlessly in a language not their mother-tongue."

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CHAPTER IV

WESTERN EDUCATION IN BENGAL 1854-1906

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE AND UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION 1889-1906

The history of English education in India from the point of view of this biography begins from Sir Charles Wood's Despatch of 1854. Wood's intentions were not very sympathetic towards higher education, particularly higher education in Calcutta. Wood wrote to Lord Dalhousie: "We shall govern India for many years but it is clear to my mind that we shall always govern it as aliens". Lord Ellenborough warned Wood, "Education will be fatal to British rule". Wood wanted to strengthen British administration in India through higher education because administration would be able to utilize the services of educated 'natives'. From this point of view the establishment of universities was necessary. He wrote, "This is the easiest step . . . I do not say the most useful". But his second thought is also significant: "If they become intelligent through education they may become dangerous". He felt it would be better to direct educational efforts to general elementary education than to higher education.¹ But the problem of elementary education was so vast: it was far beyond the resources of government. Higher education was at the same time

¹ Wood to Dalhousie 24 April, 1854

dangerous. Wood had not such misgivings about Bombay and Madras as he had about Calcutta. He ultimately yielded to Dalhousie's persuasions. But he decided to do it on the cheap. He wrote, "I care very little about teaching Hindus to read Bacon and to be examined as we should be for honours at Oxford. I have no objection to their acquiring that education but I am against paying them for acquiring it as we do in government schools . . . these highly educated natives are likely to be a very discontented class unless they are employed and we cannot find employment for them all."² He was very much disinclined to encourage higher learning. He wrote, "If they choose to educate themselves, well and good, but I am against providing our future detractors, opponents and grumblers."³

He wanted withdrawal of senior scholarships. He was thus opposed to sons of poor and middle class Indians receiving higher education. Dalhousie was largely responsible for the decision that senior scholarships were not to be withdrawn.⁴ The attitude of Wood to higher education was never very sympathetic. In our usual glib style we talk about Wood's Despatch of 1854 as the Magna Carta of English education in India. Parallels never walk on all fours. But this parallel has a certain appropriateness. The

² Wood to Dalhousie 8 June, 1854

³ Wood to Halliday 24 July, 1854

⁴ Wood papers quoted in the article on higher education in Calcutta—*Bengal past & present* July-December, 1955.

Magna Carta is regarded by many to be in its origin a feudal document. But it was capable of gathering new meaning and it became a national document. The foundation of universities which Wood's despatch envisaged had a very limited aim in the beginning. It was hoped that the university would exercise its influence on the upper classes alone and it would help to create useful agents of administration. Elitist education was the aim. But university education's appeal became much wider than the Government would wish.

The University of Calcutta was founded on 24th January, 1857. The preamble stated the objects of the Act—"Better encouragement of Her Majesty's subjects of all classes and denominations . . . in the pursuit of a regular and liberal course of education and for the purpose of ascertaining by means of examination the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of literature, science and art and of rewarding them by Academical degrees". Lord Canning, as Chancellor, expressed his hope that the time was near when the nobility and upper classes of India would think that their children had not the dues of their rank unless they passed through the course of the University. Canning's hopes were belied and Wood's fears were justified. The public in Bengal took advantage of this opportunity. It was not so much the aristocracy as the middle class, upper and lower, that took advantage of the opportunity, and though the products of the University helped to strengthen British Indian administration, some at

least swelled the ranks of detractors, opponents and grumblers.

In 1883 Vice-Chancellor H. J. Reynolds took care to point out that Government was responsible for the payment of only 40 p.c. of the whole expenditure on primary, secondary and higher education, 60 p.c. being contributed by the people themselves. Higher education in Bengal was not a luxury provided for the few at the expense of the many. He emphasised that there was "no foundation for the statement which has sometimes been made, that the instruction given in our higher schools and colleges is a gift to a limited class at the expense of the taxpayer."⁵ Sir W. W. Hunter said in his Convocation address in 1887, "This University receives no grant whatever from the State". Higher education in Bengal cost very little to Government. The policy formulated by Wood was faithfully followed.

Indian opinion was not very reconciled to the idea of a mere examining university and wanted the institution of professorships and lectureships under the auspices of the University. In 1862 Prosanna Kumar Tagore bequeathed to the University by his will a monthly income which ultimately totalled a sum of Rs. 5,14,100 for founding a professorship of law. This was the first professorship founded in the University. From Premchand Roychand, a merchant prince of Bombay, the University received "a donation of two lakhs with a request that the money should be devoted

⁵ Convocation Addresses Vol. II (C.U.)

to one large object or to a portion of some large object." The University was very much examination-minded. It was decided to utilize this donation for the purpose of a special annual examination open to M.A.s within eight years of passing the entrance examination. Ananda Mohan Bose pointed out in the Senate, on 29th April 1893, that the preamble of the Act of Incorporation was so literally interpreted that the Syndicate could not add books to the university library or establish fellowships and scholarships out of the accumulating interest in the reserve fund. Official policy, so far as the University was concerned, continued to be very narrow. Some of the University men keenly felt that the stimulus of original enquiry was very necessary, something beyond bare facts and skills and results. They could see for themselves that the University study was strait-jacketed. Just as Renaissance humanism grew outside of scholastic universities, so in Bengal what was creative came into being outside of the Calcutta University. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rajendra Lal Mitra, Mahendra Lal Sarkar and Rabindra Nath Tagore could give a new intellectual stimulus which the University failed to give. They pioneered new directions of thinking. The University under the guidance of Asutosh Mookerjee succeeded in taking possession of this precious heritage.

The resolution on Indian educational policy which was issued by the Governor-General in Council on February 21, 1913 deserves to be quoted in this context. "The policy of Government is to rely so far as

possible on private enterprise in secondary education. This policy, laid down in the Despatch of 1854, was re-stated and amplified by the Education Commission of 1882 which, while doubtful as to how far the process of withdrawal on the part of Government should be carried, argued that whatever degree of withdrawal from the direct provision of education might be found advisable there should be no relaxation of indirect but efficient control by the state. The admixture of private management and state control was again emphasised in the resolution of 1904. To this policy the Government of India adhere."⁶ The prospect of saving money on education was very much evident in the bureaucratic mind of those days. More and more private colleges therefore came into existence.

In 1888 Alfred Croft brought forward a proposal for removing classical languages from the list of compulsory subjects and the proposal could be rejected mainly by the votes of the Indian Fellows present and by the casting vote of the Chairman. This was the general attitude of the European Fellows of the Senate. Many of them thought in the Macaulayesque manner that western education represented the pacific triumph of reason over barbarism. The literature of Brahmanism was considered to be a mass of intellectual and moral rubbish. The past of India, her mythology, her religions, her laws, her ancient languages, her literature, her antiquities found no place in the Calcutta University system. The cold

⁶ *Sadler Commission Report* vol. II

breath of Macaulay's rhetoric had its shrivelling effect on Indian studies when the universities were set up. The administration of Macaulay, Edward Ryan and after them W. W. Bird, C. H. Cameron and J. W. Colville of the General Committee of Public Instruction created a tradition against Indian studies which was inherited by the University of Calcutta. In the Bombay university also the study of Indian languages and literature fell on bad days after 1867 under the influence of Oxford educationists who dominated the academic world there. A movement began for their re-instatement in the eighties. But Mahadev Govind Ranade's very modest proposal in 1894 to prescribe one Marathi, Gujarati or Kannada book along with a Sanskrit or Persian book failed in the Bombay Senate to a large extent because of the opposition of the Parsee members. In Bengal the state of things did not appear to be much better.

Prithwis Chandra Roy writes in his "Life of Chittaranjan Das" that Chittaranjan, as a member of the Undergraduate Association of the Presidency College, tried to induce the authorities of the University of Calcutta in 1886 to admit Bengali as an alternative second language for the Entrance and First Arts examinations. With Prithwis Roy he went to every member of the Senate and to the Vice-Chancellor W. W. Hunter. Everybody advised him to see Gurudas Banerjee. Prithwis Roy writes that Gurudas Banerjee expressed himself unwilling to introduce it in the curriculum of the Entrance examination because in that case Sanskrit would be neglected and

higher education would have a set-back. But it would be a mistake to think that he was opposed to the introduction of Bengali language and literature in the curriculum of the University. In his Convocation Address as Vice-Chancellor in 1891 Gurudas Banerjee said, "I deem it not merely desirable but necessary that we should encourage the study of those Indian languages that have a literature by making them compulsory subjects in our examinations in conjunction with their kindred classical languages." This was a broad hint and Asutosh Mookerjee brought the matter before the Faculty of Arts in 1891. He proposed that Bengali, Hindi and Urdu should be included in the courses for F.A., B.A., and M. A. examinations. This proposal was supported in the Faculty by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and others. It was not, however, accepted. In 1896 Gurudas Banerjee himself made this proposal and it was referred to a committee. But nothing was done in this direction.^{6a} His own efforts for the recognition of Indian vernaculars as a subject of study by university students were thus described by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee in his Convocation Address in 1913. "It is now nearly twenty-three years ago that a young and inexperienced Member of the Senate earnestly pleaded that a competent knowledge of the vernaculars should be a pre-requisite for admission to a degree in the Faculty of Arts in this university. The Senators complimented the novice on his eloquence and admired his boldness, but doubted

^{6a} *Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta* pp. 145-146

his wisdom, and by an overwhelming majority rejected his proposal on what now seems to be the truly astonishing ground that the Indian vernaculars did not deserve serious study by Indian students who had entered an Indian university. Fifteen years later, the young Senator, then grown maturer, repeated his effort, with equally disastrous result.”⁷ But as Vice-Chancellor he succeeded in persuading Senators and the Government to recognise the elementary truth that if Indian universities are ever to be indissolubly assimilated with our national life, they must ungrudgingly accord due recognition to the irresistible claims of the Indian vernaculars.” These words were uttered by him when he asked the Chancellor to confer the hony. degree of Doctor of Literature on Rabindra Nath Tagore whom he described as “a loyal and life long devotee of the most progressive of the Indian vernaculars”.

On 27 December 1921 Asutosh Mookerjee as Vice-Chancellor said on the occasion of conferring an honorary degree on the Prince of Wales: “Forty-six years ago an honorary degree was first conferred on a Prince of Wales. The distinguished graduates of this University were invited to witness the ceremony. One of the earliest graduates was permitted as an act of special favour to bring his little boy into the Senate house to have a glimpse of the Prince. Thirty years later the boy had developed into a Syndic and recorded his concurrence in a proposal to confer an honorary

⁷ *Addresses* by Asutosh Mookerjee (R. Cambray)

degree on the second Prince of Wales. By a singular turn of events he now stands before you and has the supreme satisfaction to invite your Excellency as the Chancellor of the university to confer an honorary degree on the third Prince of Wales". On 3rd January, 1876, at a very impressionable age, he saw the most distinguished graduates, Fellows, Syndics and visitors in an impressive ceremonial gathering in the new Senate House. An indelible impression must have been made on his mind, perhaps a boyish desire, when he would grow up to be a member by right of such an august assembly. His uncle Radhikaprasad Mookerjee rose to be a distinguished engineer in the Public Works department. He was nominated a Fellow of the Senate in 1881. Asutosh Mookerjee was already a university student of distinction with promise of great achievements in the future. He was naturally very much interested in university affairs. He took care to read very thoroughly minutes of the proceedings of the Senate and Syndicate which were sent to his uncle. In 1884 some university calendars and minutes were sold at an auction. He purchased them and read them with great care. He thus came to have a very good knowledge of university affairs. It was not at all surprising that Sir C. P. Ilbert, who praised him so much at the annual Convocation, spoke about him to Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy elect in England and Asutosh Mookerjee was nominated a Fellow of the University. In those days Fellows were appointed for life except in the case of resignation or departure for good from India. A relevant extract

from an official letter may almost be regarded as a citation. "My dear Sir Comer, I beg to recommend the following persons for appointment as fellows in the university in the Faculty of Arts—

Babu Asutosh Mookerjee, M.A.

There are two persons of this name, both Premchand Roychand students and both, I believe, pleaders of the High Court. The one that I recommend is the junior of the two and has been only recently admitted. He is the most distinguished mathematician that the Calcutta University has yet produced and has done a good deal of original work which has gained him the membership of one or two learned societies in Great Britain. He is or was a member of the Asiatic Society and his papers read before that body have attracted much attention. He lives at Bhowanipore".⁸

Thus began his long association with the University. He became a member of the Syndicate not long after his nomination as a Fellow. Dr. Willian Booth, his teacher of mathematics in the Presidency College, suggested that he should try to be in the Syndicate. One of his supporters was Justice J. O'Kinealy who just before the election left for England. But he spoke about him to Col. Jaret before he left the country. With Jaret's support and that of Gurudas Banerjee and Mahendralal Sarkar he came out successful in spite of the opposition of Charles Croft, Director of Public

⁸ Simla Records—Govt. of India—Home Dept. Progs. 1889
other names are omitted.

Instruction, who very much disliked him because he had refused to accept his terms for an appointment in the Presidency College. O'Kinealy was so well inclined towards Asutosh Mookerjee because he appreciated his genuine thirst for knowledge.

In 1887 there was a sale of some books of the Surveyor General's library. There were two rare and old mathematical works. A European official whispered something into the auctioneer's ears. Asutosh Mookerjee was bidding. He raised his bid for these two books upto Rs. 101/- and 151/-. Justice O'Kinealy expressed his surprise when the bill was presented to him and he was informed about the eagerness of the lawyer mathematician to purchase these two volumes. He heard his name, enquired of Rashbehari Ghose and through him sent a request to Asutosh Mookerjee to see him.⁹ He had a friendly disposition ever afterwards to Asutosh Mookerjee and his aspirations.

Asutosh Mookerjee represented the University of Calcutta on the Bengal Legislative Council from 1899 to 1903. In March 1903 he was elected to represent the Corporation of Calcutta. He was a local member of the University Commission of Lord Curzon. In 1904 he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council by the votes of the non-official members of the Legislative Council of Bengal.

In the Imperial Legislative Council Lord Curzon spoke on the 18th March, 1904, on the Universities

⁹ *Sir Asutosh Mookerjee: A study* by P. C. Sinha

Bill. His attitude to the contribution of Asutosh Mukherjee to the debate is best described in his own words—"The honourable member was only the other day elected to the Council. No sooner did this news reach us here than we at once placed him upon the Select Committee of the bill though we knew it must add considerably to the length and contentiousness of the proceedings but so anxious were we to give full scope to reasonable and competent criticism that we at once took advantage of his service . . . we do not want time-servers or sycophants".¹⁰ The two most formidable critics of the bill were G. K. Gokhale and Asutosh Mookerjee.

When the Indian Universities (validation) Bill—1905 was brought before the Imperial Legislative Council the mover wanted the transitory provisions to be inserted in Section 12 of the Act. He said in this context, "We owe these transitory provisions in the main to the ingenuity of a learned judge of the High Court of Calcutta, a member of this Council a year ago, a member of the Select Committee that was responsible for turning the bill into its present shape and one of the most consistent allies of Mr. Gokhale."¹¹

These two official pronouncements best describe the part played by Asutosh Mookerjee in the Imperial

¹⁰ Curzon—*Speeches* vol. III (Asutosh Collection)

¹¹ Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India Assembled for the purpose of making Laws and Regulations 1904

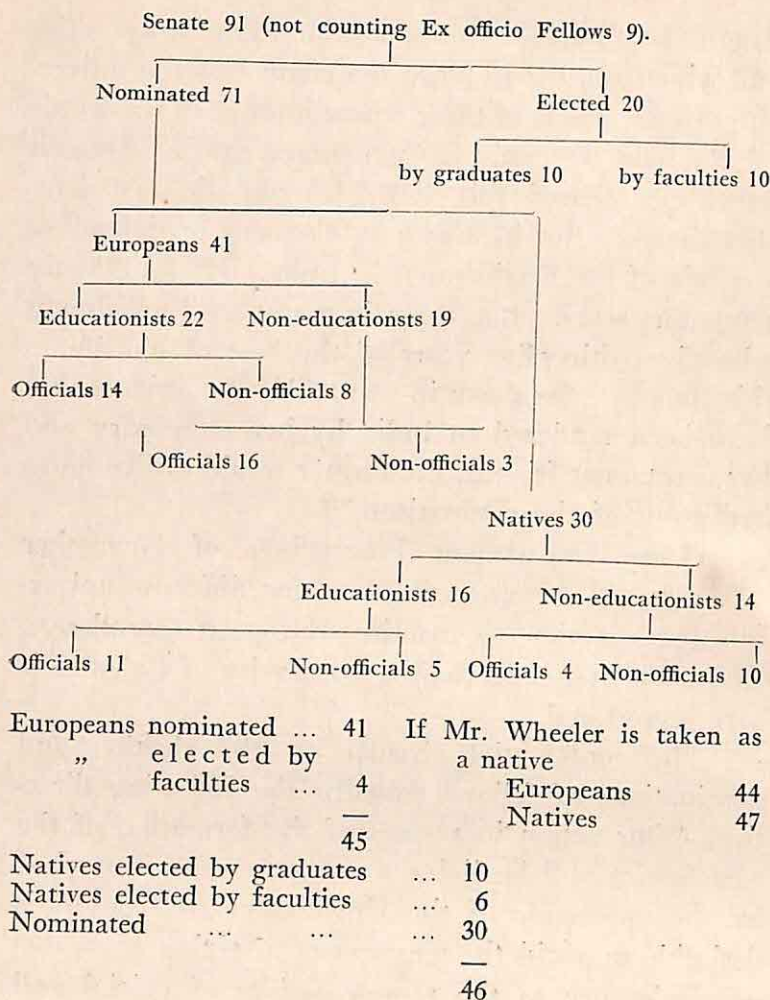
Legislative Council in his opposition to the Universities Bill which wanted to place the control of the universities in the hands of those whose interest in the words of Gokhale was only a "temporary one". Asutosh Mookerjee shared this view. Curzon did not deny this charge. But he was very eloquent in defending the role of the Englishmen in India. He said, "only temporary—yes. But there is many an Englishman who gives thirty-five years of the best of his life to this country. Set down in two tables the services that have been rendered to India by her temporary and her permanent friends, the former would not come so badly out of the comparison."¹²

Home Department Proceedings of November 1904¹³ record government plans for different universities with a view to ensuring European ascendancy. The table that concerns the University of Calcutta is here reproduced.

The confidential circular on the election and nominations of fellows contains the following directive—"Our action in respect of the formation of the new Senate will be liable to be vehemently attacked by the opponents of the Universities Act and it is desirable to avoid the appearance of giving an undue preponderance to the representatives of official and departmental interests. We must, however, have a working majority in favour of our views".

¹² Curzon—*Speeches* Vol. III

¹³ Simla Record 1, 1904—Govt. of India Home Dept. Education A



The Viceroy, as Chancellor, nominated 80 of the members. His approval was necessary for the election of the remaining twnty. The Vice-Chancellor was nominated by the Government. All regulations were submitted to Government. The appointment of all

Professors, Readers and Lectures must be approved by the Government. As the Sadler Commission Report points out, "The Indian universities under the new Act were the most completely governmental universities in the world." This was the Senate which became in March 1906 an instrument in the hands of Asutosh Mookerjee in the gigantic task of reorganization of higher education in this land.

We talk about university legislation, model Acts, Statutes and Ordinances. We forget that universities depend for their vitality on men, not measures. A university is judged by its ability to attract the best people and provide them with the most favourable conditions for research, communication and teaching. In spite of the limitations of the Act the idea of a university became virtually alive during the years 1906-1924.

CHAPTER V

VICE-CHANCELLOR 1906-1914 AND UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS 1914-1917

The proposal to appoint Asutosh Mookerjee as Vice-Chancellor was initiated by H. H. Risley, the Home Secretary. His note suggesting this appointment gives us a very good idea as to how the official mind worked.

"Sir A. Pedler will leave India about the end of March. It is necessary to consider the question of appointing his successor.

I have no hesitation in saying that the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Mookerjee is marked out by his scientific attainments, his long connection with the University and the work he has done for it and by his official position as conspicuously qualified for the post of Vice-Chancellor. Dr. Mookerjee was appointed a Fellow of the University in January, 1889 and has been a member of the Syndicate for more than 16 years. During that time he has attended every meeting of the Syndicate except one and all meetings of the Senate and of the Faculties of Arts and Law. For the last eleven years he has been President of the Board of Studies in Mathematics and he has conducted the highest examinations in Mathematics and law since 1887. He represented the University on the Bengal Council from 1899 to 1903 and was Additional Member of the Viceroy's Council as representing

Bengal in 1903-1904. He served on the Indian Universities Commission in 1902 as the local member for Bengal and when the University was reconstituted in 1904 he was appointed by Government to be an ordinary Fellow and appointed in the three faculties of Arts, Science and Law. During the last year the Senate has been occupied with the important task of preparing regulations under Section 25 of the Act and for this purpose has been divided into a number of committees on all of which except one Dr. Mookerjee is now serving. Owing to this and to his remarkable knowledge of the enormous mass of minutes framed by the University since its establishment he is better acquainted with the internal working of the University than any one, not excepting the present Vice-Chancellor, who has been generally dependent on Dr. Mookerjee's advice in conducting the discussions in the various committees. Dr. Mookerjee had a brilliant academic career, his chief distinctions being the Premchand Roychand Studentship, the degree of Doctor in law and the Tagore Law Professorship. In his special subject, Pure Mathematics, he has a European reputation and the results of his original researches have been embodied with his name in standard Cambridge text books.

"The appointment of a distinguished Indian as Vice-Chancellor would undoubtedly be popular and would tend in some degree to discourage the idea that the sole purpose of the Universities Act was to tighten official control over the universities. But apart from this it is essential while the complicated process of

framing the regulations is going forward that the Vice-Chancellor should be some one who has a thorough knowledge of the past history of the university and of the intricate discussions which have taken place regarding the regulations during the last year. No one else possesses this knowledge and I can think of no one who is competent to carry out the difficult task of framing a compact and consistent body of university regulations. I believe that Dr. Mookerjee can be trusted to carry out the policy of Government in university matters. In a confidential statement made by him before the Universities' Commission he strongly condemned the systematic lowering of standards to which Sir Henry Cotton (not an university man himself) had lent the support of his influence. And when I was on the syndicate with Dr. Mookerjee ten years ago he was always on the side of sound education. Finally I may mention that it is an advantage for the Vice-Chancellor to be a judge of the High Court, since the political faction in the Senate is composed mainly of pleaders and they are amenable to a judge before whom they have to appear in Court than to an executive official."

Asutosh Mookerjee was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta on the 31st March, 1906 for two years. He was reappointed three times. He was therefore Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta continuously from the 31st March 1906 to the 30th March 1914. In the words of Lord Carmichael "this was the most important honorary office in the gift of the Viceroy." He enjoyed the

confidence of the Government of India until about the middle of his fourth term. But he was not in the leading strings of red tape. The collection of letters of Asutosh Mookerjee preserved in the National Library is very fragmentary. But there is one significant letter from the Simla Secretariat dated 25th July, 1909. It best describes the relation in which he stood to the Government of India. ". . . the few matters on which the Government of India have differed from the Senate but you must not be too 'absolute' with us and demand our agreement or our lives." Asutosh Mookerjee accepted the Vice-Chancellorship in the pursuit of an ideal. No doubt he loved power but the ideal occupied the higher place.

"Dr. Mookerjee can be trusted to carry out the policy of Government in University matters"—So wrote Risley when he suggested his name. What was the policy? They wanted to have at least forty-four to forty-five Europeans in the Senate, not counting ex-officio Fellows. This number was maintained throughout these years. Fellows were normally appointed on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor. Ordinary Fellows held office for a period of five years. They were eligible for re-appointment. There were vacancies to fill up every year. In 1906 twenty-one Fellows were appointed. Thirteen of them were Europeans. In 1907 eleven Fellows were appointed. Eight of them were Europeans. In 1909 twenty Fellows were appointed, eleven being Europeans. In 1910 of the twenty-seven nominations eleven went to Europeans. In 1911 seventeen out of thirty were Europeans, in

1912, twelve out of nineteen, in 1913 eight out of thirteen. The European section of the Senate therefore continued to be as strong throughout the years 1906-1914 as the Government of India wanted it to be. He knew he could rely upon the cogency of his arguments, his persuasiveness and his personality.

When Asutosh Mookerjee later referred to the critics of the 'policy' of the University his answer was that the policy of the University was what was implied in the University Regulations with some latitude of interpretation—"to remove its obvious defects in organisation and working and in certain no doubt very essential points to extend its aims and functions." During the two years that Alexander Pedler was the Vice-Chancellor the Senate could not come to an agreement on the new regulations. The Government of India had to form a small committee. Asutosh Mookerjee was made the President and to this committee was delegated the work of framing the regulations. This committee showed exemplary promptitude. He could send a telegram to Simla on the 12th April 1906. "Senate finished work on all regulations." The Government of India accepted these regulations without any alteration. They form 320 pages of University Calender—"a through careful and honest attempt to carry out in detail the principles laid down in the Act" (Sadler Commission Report vol. II). H. Sharp, who later became Education Secretary, Government of India, took pains to point out that some of the regulations were worded with intentional vagueness. (One instance paragraph 7 of Chapter XVI). Surendra

Nath Banerjee writes in this connection, "I was on the committee of the Senate. We recommended that the history of England should be a part of the curriculum for matriculation examination. The recommendation was rejected by a committee of the Government, which finally settled the regulation." We should not be surprised. The policy of the bureaucracy was to control the young mind in its most impressionable period. In the private papers of Lord Curzon there is a letter dated 14th February 1900 to Sir Francis Maclean, Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University—a policy of calculated insufficiency of the educational curriculum. Curzon wrote, "Dear Sir Francis Maclean, More circumspection is required in the selection of the text books for the different educational courses . . . The list, for instance, of books prescribed in the course of reading at the Calcutta University is not from our point of view all that is desirable. It will be sufficient to mention Burke's French Revolution, which is one of the text books prescribed for the B.A. Examination of 1901. No one will deny that the book is a model of English style but the matter of it might be harmful even to some young English readers and it is certainly dangerous food for Indian students . . . we can ourselves take no direct steps. This does not appear to me to be either sound in theory or successful in practice . . . if we could frame a useful body of rules for the preparations of an authorised list of text books by co-operation between the University and the Government . . . I am, therefore, invoking your assistance." It was in pursuance of this policy that there was an

insistence on omitting the history of England from the Matriculation curriculum. It has been said that at the bottom of the new spirit of Bengal was the careful study of the history of England by young men in their teens. Under pressure of the official bloc English history was omitted from the new curriculum for the Matriculation examination. Asutosh Mookerjee most probably referred to this omission in his first Convocation speech—"I have not the remotest desire to re-open controversies which have been laid at rest for the present because in all efforts at reform a period is ultimately reached when debate and discussion must be closed and solid work undertaken." He included Indian history in the new curriculum. His policy was not to remove alien control at once but tentacle by tentacle. Surendra Nath Banerjee himself paid a tribute to his very considerate administration of the regulations. He writes in his book *A Nation in Making* "It is right to say he enforced the regulations with a measure of discretion, a regard for all interests that partly allayed suspicion and anxiety they had created in the mind of the educated community, in Bengal." Asutosh Mookerjee said in 1924 that when he was called upon to accept the office of Vice-Chancellor Lord Minto only enjoined him "to work in concurrence with the Senate in such manner as might appear to my judgment to be in the best interests of the University". The European bloc which could command a majority in the Senate, if they were very much interested in any matter, might have made it necessary for the new Vice-Chancellor not to insist

on some measures which he regarded for the time being as comparatively unimportant. He included English history in the course of reading for the Intermediate Examination in Arts.

One great political triumph which he achieved in the first year of his Vice-Chancellorship was possible only because he enjoyed the confidence of the Viceroy. Fullerism was running amuck in the newly created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. The boys of two schools in Sirajganj in Eastern Bengal were guilty of indisciplined conduct in connection with anti-partition agitation. The Education Department of the newly created province asked the Syndicate of the Calcutta University to disaffiliate these schools. The Lt. Governor endorsed the recommendation. Asutosh Mookerjee wrote to the Government of India requesting that the University might be permitted to deal with this affair as it thought proper. The letter by H. H. Risley to Bamfylde Fuller, Lt. Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, shows that the Government of India agreed with the University's point of view.

"The Government of India have recently had occasion to consider the application made to the Syndicate of the Calcutta University in your Chief Secretary's letter to the Registrar on the 10th February for the withdrawal of recognition from these schools under private management in Sirajganj. They understood that some difference of opinions is likely to arise in the Syndicate as to the degree of culpability that attaches to the proprietors of the schools and that in the event of the

Syndicate deciding to withdraw recognition or take any sort of punitive action the question is certain to be brought before the Senate where it will form the subject of an acrimonious public discussion in which the partition of the province of Bengal and the administration of the new province will be violently attacked. In the present state of public feeling in Bengal it seems to the Government of India highly inexpedient that a debate of this nature should take place whatever may be the decision of the University authorities on this particular case. They do not deny that the conduct of the students was scandalous in the extreme and that it was connived at by some at any rate of the masters. But they doubt whether a disciplinary measure of this kind adopted at a time of great public excitement is likely to exercise salutary influence over the general body of students and masters who have identified themselves with recent political movements. Instead of having recourse to collective punishment which may involve some innocent persons and which in any case is liable to be misconstrued in England they would prefer to rely upon the gradual effect of the new University regulations which aim, they understand, at discouraging the participation of students in political movements by enforcing the responsibility of the masters and the managing committees of schools for maintaining discipline both in and out of the school house.

“For these reasons I am to suggest for your honour’s consideration the advisability of withdrawing the application for withdrawal of recognition made in

your letter to the Registrar of 10th February, 1906."

Fuller's resignation letter dated 3rd August, 1906 contains the following sentence: "To withdraw from our position in the case would be to make a concession not to the interest of education but to those people in Calcutta who have been striving to render my government impossible." Lord Minto accepted the resignation with alacrity. He was apparently unable to carry both Partition and Fuller on his back. Those who wonder how Asutosh Mookerjee could have acquired such an ascendancy over the mind of Minto would find the reason for it in his letter to Morley, written on 23rd January 1907—"His evident force of character has always impressed me."

As an agency of scholarship and education the University was functioning rather indifferently. Harish Chandra Mukherjee wrote in the *Hindu Patriot* not long after the foundation of the University that it was considered sufficient to hold examinations, pass candidates and publish calendars. Academic government was sluggish, collegiate education was lacking very much in vitality. There were no great aims. In 1906 there was also intense political excitement throughout Bengal which added to the difficulties of educational reform. A creative energy of great drive and command was harnessed in the cause of higher education. Aimfulness now became the most distinguishing feature of University administration.

The Government regarded the services of Asutosh Mookerjee as valuable. He regarded this as an opportunity for rendering great services to his alma mater,

“the great widening and raising of the functions of our university”. The re-appointment of Asutosh Mookerjee in 1908 is thus recorded in the Proceedings of the Home Dept. Education (April 1908—Nos. 12-16). “The work of the next few months will be enormous involving a minute examination of the teaching staff, laboratories etc. of 60 colleges and 600 schools and determining in the case of each institution for which subjects it should be affiliated, if a college, or recognised, if a school. Dr. Mukherjee is the only man in India capable of carrying his business through a Senate on which many conflicting interests are represented and even he will find it difficult to do the work within the prescribed time. With reference to the terms of Section 5 of the Act of Incorporation the notification re-appointing Dr. Mukherjee should be dated 30th March.”

“His excellency entirely agrees.”

H. H. RISLEY.

A. ADAMSON.

He was placed on deputation for eight months in connection with the application of the University Act to schools and colleges from 1st January, 1908 to the end of August 1908. The proposal was made by the Lt. Governor Sir. A. H. L. Fraser. He wrote, “Dr. Mukherjee’s medical advisers consider that his illness, in its severity, is largely due to breakdown for overwork. . . . It would therefore, be most unsafe for him to undertake the duties of Vice-Chancellor along with his official duties in the High Court.

"You are aware that at the present time with the introduction of the new regulations the constant stream of regulations regarding the schools and colleges which the University is examining, all the questions regarding affiliation or disaffiliation in respect of the equipment of institutions and a mass of other work the duties of the Vice-Chancellor are certain to be exceedingly heavy until August next. After August next, by which date a great number of these matters have to be settled, the work will be more within the capacity of the honorary Vice-Chancellor.

"I do not think that I need press on you or on his Excellency the Chancellor the immense importance of retaining the services of Dr. Mookerjee at the present time. The work he has done has been in many respects thankless work ; but it has been of the greatest value to the cause of education . . . the services that he will be able to render during that period in continuation of the services already rendered by him to the University in its new Constitution will be worth far more than the salary which he will draw ; and in fact I do not see how the work can be done without him. His grasp of the principles of University administration, his command of the University in respect of schools and colleges and the public ; and his great influence in the Senate render his services invaluable."

The Act of Incorporation of 1857 imposed courses of study on colleges but made no attempt to control their academic activities. The colleges under new regulations became an integral part of the University.

He thus widened the conception of the University. The new regulations dealt also with the question of students' residence. For the first time in the history of University education all schools that were to be recognised were inspected and their condition ascertained. The standard prescribed under the circumstances was very moderate. He said, "No institution which has any element of vitality will be driven to close its doors." He felt that only substantial grants-in-aid could promote secondary education. He wrote in his minute on the schools in September 1906—"The impression left on my mind is that about 10 p.c. of the schools are good, another 10 per cent fairly good, about 10 per cent moderately fair but the remaining 70 per cent very inefficient from the university point of view." Lord Lytton said in the Senate after the death of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, "The imposition of this upper story (Post-graduate department) upon the buildings of the ground floor revealed and intensified in an alarming degree the structural defects of the latter. Sir Asutosh was the first to admit and as a member of the Sadler Commission he signed a report which frankly recognised the fact." It was not possible for him to vitalize the school system and reorganize higher education at the same time. There was no question of a choice. E. F. Oaten, Director of Public Instruction, wrote after his death, "Had he entered the Legislative Council, he would, I think, have sooner or later, taken charge of the Education portfolio. Had fate permitted this, he would have completed his life's work by adding the reform of the school system to his

other achievements in the sphere of educational reorganization. We are left with the saddest of reflections 'It might have been'."

The new Vice-Chancellor, with the concurrence of the Senate, introduced changes of a fundamental character in the curriculum. The leading principles of training were calculated to simplify examinations. The new regulations insisted upon a knowledge of the student's own vernacular from matriculation to graduation. At the matriculation stage an intelligent comprehension of plain modern English on familiar subjects was also demanded. One classical language was made compulsory. He was also to learn elements of mathematics which also included training in geometry. Science—rudiments of experimental physics or mechanics or inorganic chemistry—could not be taught at this stage because very few schools could be adequately equipped for this. A choice of subjects was given which included a general knowledge of the history of India and geography of the world. Beyond matriculation thoroughness was demanded and a wide choice of subjects was given. Changes of a fundamental character were also introduced in the Faculties of Law and Medicine. They were also expected to promote thoroughness. A degree in teaching was introduced. The doctorate degree was introduced in all Faculties for the "recognition and promotion of original research."

Asutosh Mookerjee was convinced that a combination of research and teaching was the inalienable basic principle of a university. The Universities Act

of 1904 was merely a permissive Act so far as the teaching functions were concerned. London, which was the model for Indian universities, was undertaking teaching functions. It was, therefore, felt that Universities in India should also assume teaching functions within defined limits. Gokhale said, "It seems this is just the part of the bill which will not come into operation." He wrote in his minute of dissent on Universities' Bill that if university chairs, laboratories and museums had to be provided the money had to be provided by government. Curzon said in his reply "Exactly! but why? There is plenty of wealth among his own countrymen if they were willing to devote it to those objects. Dr. Mukherjee said that they would not come forward because of the bill. Is he so sure they came forward before?" No body perhaps attached much importance to this clause except Asutosh Mookerjee. It provided him with an opening for which he was waiting and he was not slow to take advantage of it. He said in 1913, "Our universities have done teaching, even teaching of a high type but the teaching has not matured that particular precious fruit which university teaching in the west bears in such increasing abundance. The Indian universities have contributed exceedingly little towards the advance and increase of knowledge. They have acted as faithful guardians of the sacred flame but they have done nothing to make it burn brighter and higher."

Under the new regulations, a graduate of the university could proceed to the M. A. examination two years after graduation only if he pursued a regular

course in an affiliated college or under university teachers. If he had not done so he could appear at the examination only at the end of not less than three years from graduation. The courses were made comprehensive, in some subjects almost as comprehensive as in the British universities. "The University could under the regulations provide for post-graduate teaching, study and research and could appoint persons connected with affiliated colleges and persons not so connected for M. A. and M. Sc. teaching and the University could provide for the remuneration of a university teacher from university funds. In 1909, 18 teachers in colleges were recommended for appointment as M. A. teachers—15 in Calcutta, 2 in Dacca, 1 in Rajshahi. A remarkable expansion of post-graduate teaching began. Very few of the affiliated colleges could meet the demand, because the new regulations demanded instruction in a highly specialised department of knowledge. At first a judicious use of existing agencies was attempted. The co-operative college system did not work harmoniously without constant breaks. The plan was, therefore, evolved of University M. A. classes—'immediate creation of more permanent agencies'. The number of M. A. students in the University classes was 19 in 1908-09, it increased to 1172 in 1915-16. He wanted that M. A. teaching need not aim at fostering the spirit of original research but it should somehow be imbued with the spirit so that specially qualified youthful minds may have a chance to catch sparks of its fire." University Professors, the best men available, would by

precept and example create a desire for higher study and research. When a committee formed by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Asutosh Mookerjee with P. C. Ray, B. N. Seal, C. J. Hamilton, George Howells, Henry Hayden, W. W. Hornell, G. Anderson and W. C. Wordsworth unanimously recommended in 1916 that the central control of higher teaching in arts and science should be placed entirely under the University, the work in affiliated colleges should cease, and the University should be placed in entire charge of it, Asutosh Mookerjee achieved the greatest ambition of his life. It is relevant to note that in the committee there were six European members and only three Indians, including the President. The Government of India approved of the scheme and the new system was brought into operation on 1 September, 1917. Chaim Weitzman, Founder of the State of Israël, is said to have told Lord Samuel, "Difficulties take a long time to solve, the impossible takes a little longer."

The story of the creation of professorships records a series of achievements. He could persuade the administration of Lord Minto to establish a university chair in economics and to associate it with the name of Minto. Professor Monohar Lal was appointed the first Minto Professor of Economics in 1909. When the capital was transferred from Calcutta to Delhi Asutosh Mookerjee could persuade the Chancellor Lord Hardinge to establish two professorships—George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy and Hardinge Professor of Higher Mathematics. The

first incumbent of George V chair was Professor Brojendra Nath Seal and the first appointee to the Hardinge chair was Professor W. H. Young. He had wanted to create a Regius Professorship commemorating the visit of the King Emperor for Indian History and Antiquities. As the Government was not prepared to approve of the idea in this form the professorship of Ancient Indian History and Culture was created from the proceeds of the sale of Sanskrit publications and the first incumbent was G. Thibaut, who was appointed in 1913. "These professorships were regarded as a pledge and promise of further development of University teaching on these lines."

Special Readership lectures in different subjects helped to create an atmosphere of research. G. Thibaut's lectures were on the astronomies of ancient oriental nations. Professor Schuter's on the progress of modern physics, Dr. Holland's on the geology of India. Gilbert Walker spoke on mechanical physics. Dinesh Chandra Sen's lectures on the history of Bengali language and literature marked the beginning of a new line of enquiry. The University also secured the services of Dr. Cullis for Readership lectures on mathematics. A Japanese scholar Yamakani was requested to deliver a course of lectures on Buddhism. Hermann Oldenburg of Gottingen spoke on "Methods of Western scholarship in the field of ancient Indian Research." Andrew Russell Forsyth gave advanced students here a good idea of his wonderful mastery of mathematical analysis. Hermann Jacobi spoke on the theories of Indian rhetoric and Paul Vinogradoff

on kinship in early law. As he referred to these lectures by eminent investigators he said, "The seed has fallen on fruitful soil."

In 1908 the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred on Satis Chandra Acharya for his work on Indian Logic, on Abdullah-al-Mamun Suhrawardy for his work on Muhammadan jurisprudence. He felt he could now plead eloquently in favour of research. He pointed out how P. C. Roy could combine teaching with research and if one failed to follow his example it was because of the absence of will power. He reached the height of eloquence in this part of his Convocation speech of 1908. "I hope the conception of research has come amongst us to stay and will spread throughout the land from peak to peak like the signal fires described by the Greek dramatists of old." He described research in the following words: "Call it by whatever name you like as investigation or as advancement of knowledge in the language of Bacon or as creative action in the language of Münsterberg." He thus broke the pattern into which higher education had been crystallized. In 1909 Upendra Nath Brahmachari and Adityanath Mukherjee took their doctorate degrees, in 1910 Brojendra Nath Seal, Hiralal Halder and Syamdas Mukhopadhyaya. Thus a succession of original contributions of undoubted merit showed how justified was the faith of Asutosh Mookerjee in Indian universities' capacity to contribute towards advancement of learning.

Lord Curzon had tauntingly told G. K. Gokhale

and Asutosh Mookerjee that moneyed men in India had not come forward to make endowments to Indian universities. There had been no endowments for forty years. Indian aristocracy did not imitate the munificence of Premchand Roychand and Prasanna Kumar Tagore. But the Vice-Chancellor's devotion and capacity now inspired confidence after a period of what may be described as prolonged distrust. The University got 2.5 lakhs from the Maharaja of Darbhanga which was utilized for the erection of the Darbhanga Library building, and Guruprassanna Ghose donated 2.5 lakhs which could be utilized for sending Indian students for training in the arts and industries of Europe, America and Japan. Premchand Roychand studentships were at first awarded on the basis of merit, tested by examinations. Subsequently they were rewarded partly on the basis of examination results and partly on the evidence of capacity for research. They were now awarded solely for the promotion of capacity for research. The University continued to receive a number of other donations until they were all thrown into the shade by the benefactions of Taraknath Palit and Rashbehari Ghose. On the 15th June 1912, Taraknath Palit executed a trust deed in favour of the University by which he transferred money and land to the value of more than seven lakhs of rupees "for promotion and diffusion of scientific and technical education and the cultivation and advancement of science, pure and applied, among his countrymen." On 8th October, 1912 he executed a second trust deed

in favour of the University by which he transferred money and property worth seven lakhs of rupees, subject to his life interest. On 8th August, 1913 Rashbehari Ghose offered a sum of ten lakhs of rupees for the foundation of four professorships and eight research studentships in connection with the University College of Science and for the maintenance of its laboratory. This endowment was supplemented by him by two more endowments in 1919 and in 1921—the three totalling the sum of Rs. 24,50,500. (present value). Gifts are to be measured by their serviceableness and by the special demand of time and place. The laying of newer foundations became now possible. Science teaching and research by Indians thus began in Calcutta. Praphulla Chandra Roy adorned the Palit chair of Chemistry, Chandrasekhar Venkata Raman became Palit Professor of Physics, Ganesh Prasad became Rashbehari Ghose Professor of applied Mathematics, Praphulla Chandra Mitra was appointed Rashbehari Ghose Professor of Chemistry, Debendra Mohan Bose became Rashbehari Ghose Professor of Physics and S. P. Agharkar was appointed Rashbehari Ghose Professor of Botany. When Asutosh Mookerjee laid the foundation stone of the new University College of Science he said, "I trust, I may be permitted to dwell without impropriety on the gratifying circumstance that of the six Professors, fully one half come from provinces other than Bengal. We are proud, indeed, to have in our teaching body those distinguished representatives of Madras, Bombay and the United Provinces. No stronger testimony is needed to

emphasise the cosmopolitan character of science, and I fervently hope that although the College of Science is an integral component part of the University of Calcutta, it will be regarded not as a provincial but as an All-India College of Science to which students will flock from every corner of the Indian empire, attracted by the excellence of the instruction imparted and of the facilities provided for research." He wanted the establishment of "a residential college of science, where the professors and students might come into the closest personal contact and continue to foster a truly academic spirit." Research work was to be undertaken and advanced instruction was to be given on a moderately comprehensive plan. But the Government of India was not prepared to supplement the benefactions by a grant on a generous scale and plans had to be modified. But enthusiasm was aroused. A band of brilliant young men began their career as lecturers and as research workers. Hopes were not belied. Jnanendra Chandra Ghose, Meghnad Saha, Satyendra Nath Bose, Sisir Kumar Mitra, Nikhil Ranjan Sen, Girindra Sekhar Bose, Bibhuti Bhushan Datta, all destined to places of honour in the world of science, belonged to that brilliant band of pioneers. Asutosh Mookerjee "furthered the true progress of his people by diverting some of the best among them from the chief industries of the land, law and government service, to scholastic careers." In the Science Convention of 1917, at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Professor C. V. Raman, as President of the Physico-Mathematical section, gave his

appraisal of the work which was now begun in the Science College.

"The introduction of the new regulations which came into force in Calcutta University in 1909 laid the foundation for much subsequent progress. These regulations generally strengthened mathematical teaching in the university and the study of physics was considerably stiffened by the greater insistence upon laboratory equipment and practical work.

"Readership lectures were delivered by Dr. A. Schuster and Dr. G. T. Walker. Opportunity was also given to local men to show their capacity. Lectures on "Optical theories" delivered by Dr. D. N. Mullick, which have since been published in book form by the Cambridge University Press, have been formally reviewed in "Nature."

"The successful fruition of the object of the donors was, however, delayed and hampered by a combination of unfortunate circumstances. The most serious cause of the delay was the absence of that support from Government which alone could have made possible the steady construction and equipment of a first class physical laboratory for research. Such assistance could surely have been looked for. Further causes of delay were the law suit on the Palit estate which made permanency of the endowment a matter for the decision of the law courts and the attitude of the Member for Education (Sir Harcourt Butler) who declined to permit my joining the Palit chair until I resigned my permanent appointment in the face of this uncertainty. In fact it was not possible for me

formally to join my duties in the university until July 1917."

"Presidency College had arrangements for higher teaching in electricity, magnetism and optics and ignored all other branches of physics. . . . Even in regard to electricity, magnetism and optics the arrangements were inadequate. Practically the whole of that part of optics which has a practical application was completely ignored and no attempt appears to have been made to teach the mathematical theory in a really adequate manner. With regard to electricity and magnetism no serious attempt was made to teach those parts of the theory that had a close bearing on technical applications of the subject. It is precisely here that the University College of Science has come to fill the gap . . . under the new arrangement the higher teaching of physics has been divided up between the combined staffs of the University College of Science and the Presidency College. . . . This has made a greater degree of specialisation and wide choice of subjects possible . . . the most substantial advance has been effected in the teaching of the mathematical aspects of the different branches of physics. . . . An organisation for original research of a high type in physics has been firmly established in Calcutta. In support of this statement I give a list of 25 papers showing the work done by the schools during the last three years". A wide arrangement of subjects for teaching and research appeared to be the characteristic feature of post-graduate teaching in about all branches of knowledge. There was the stimulus from

the consciousness that recognition awaited successful work. Asutosh Mookerjee said in the Science Convention on 2nd March 1919 over which he presided "what our workers needed was sympathy of the right kind, which was helpful and did not tend to degenerate into a patronising attitude on the one hand or into meddling interference on the other."

In legal education, hitherto the weakest point in the university academic system, he effected a total reform. He "built up a noble university law college where instruction in law was imparted to hundreds of students on a plan infinitely more methodical and comprehensive than anything on the same line ever dreamt of in India." The University Law College, for the promotion of legal instruction in accordance with a new curriculum of studies, was formally opened in July 1909. It could boast not long afterwards of a very well-equipped library of law books. Onath Nath Deb made a handsome donation which was utilized for the grant of a research prize in law. Prosanna Kumar Tagore's beneficence had helped the University to create the Tagore Professorship in Law early in 1870. Asutosh Mookerjee hoped that Tagore Professors' annual lectures would create greater enthusiasm in the new atmosphere which the new law college would create. Prodyot Kumar Tagore presented to the law College the library of valuable law books left by his grand uncle. Dr. S. C. Bagchi, an eminent scholar and a jurist of international reputation, was appointed Principal of the college. Dr. Bagchi later made a gift of some of his books to the Calcutta University

Library. While preparing a descriptive list of these books the Assistant Librarian found a telegram in one of them sent by Asutosh Mookerjee to S. C. Bagchi who was then in Darjeeling—"Accept Principalship. Dictate your own terms". "This was the spirit of his unending quest for men who would help to vitalize the intellectual life of the university. He was anxious to make this law college a model institution. We can only record his high hopes. We know they were not realized.

The letter which he wrote as Vice-Chancellor to Professor H. M. Percival, his old teacher of English in the Presidency College, then in retirement in England, is a document which shows how anxious he was to raise the level of post-graduate teaching.

Senate House,
Calcutta
The 16th October, 1912.

My dear Sir,

I trust you will forgive me, if I venture to trouble you even in your retirement ; but I cannot forget that I owe my success in life very much to the early training I received from you and I still venture to entertain the hope that you are kindly disposed to me.

"Since you left this country, I have endeavoured to develop post-graduate study in this university. Since the New Regulations came into force, M. A. teaching has been attempted in two or three colleges, and even that on a somewhat limited scale. This I

have felt, if allowed to continue, is likely to hamper the progress of high education in this country. We have seven hundred schools within our jurisdiction and the time may be far distant when it will be possible to have in many of them good M.A. teachers. But what about the fifty colleges affiliated to the university? We have been insisting that each college should have on its staff at least two good M.A.'s in each subject. How can this be realised, unless the university turns out, year after year, a fairly large number of well-trained M.A.'s.? I have cosequently organised this year university M.A. lectures on a somewhat extensive scale in Pure Mathematics, History, Economics, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Mental and Moral philosophy and English. We have in each subject a number of paid lecturers who lecture regularly so as to be able to cover the course in their respective subjects in two years. The system has been very successful, and at the present moment there are more than five hundred students reading for the M.A. degree under the direct control of the university ; in some of the subjects, the number of students is quite high, for instance, we have as many as 90 in Pure Mathematics and 70 in English. The one subject in which I have found great difficulty in getting suitable Professors is English. I have induced Mr. Herambachandra Maitra of the City College to give four lectures a week and Mr. Rabindranath Dutta, M.A., who took his degree both here and at Cambridge, gives six lectures a week. But these two cannot possibly cover the whole course, and the students are naturally disappointed, specially when

they compare the provision made for students in some of the other subjects. Under these circumstances, my mind naturally goes back to you as the only scholar who could do justice to any considerable portion of the M.A. course in English. I have hesitated for many weeks and doubted whether it would be fair on my part to approach you with such a request after your retirement. But I have ultimately, very selfishly, perhaps, decided to trouble you, because, as the Sanskrit poet says, the distressed man is likely to be unreasonable. I feel convinced that if I could only induce you to come back to this country, the question of post-graduate teaching in English by the university would be instantly solved. Nothing could be better for our students than lectures by you, say 8 or 10 hours a week, for which the university would be prepared to offer an honorarium of Rs. 500/- a month ; and if you so desire, the appointment can be guaranteed, say, for five years. You will find no difficulty so far as library is concerned, because I have just got from the Government of India a grant of half a lac for books, out of which sum we could certainly spend, if necessary, five to ten thousand rupees for the purchase of books suitable or necessary for post-graduate work in English. The work covers about 25 weeks in the year, and the classes are closed for about 12 weeks in summer, 4 weeks during the Durga Puja holidays and 2 weeks during Christmas. I trust you will consider sympathetically the appeal I am making to you and should you feel inclined to consider the proposal favourably, there is plenty of time to discuss and settle

details, because I am not expecting to be able to induce you to come here before July when our next term begins. Of course if you could come this year, during winter, we shall all be delighted.

"I recently met your brother who had come down to Calcutta on professional business and I was very pleased to hear from him that you are in good health.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,
ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

SOURCE

- (1) Government of India Records—Home—Education (Relevant files) 1887-1917.
- (2) *Addresses*—Literary and scientific by Asutosh Mukherjee (R. Cambray & co. 1915).
- (3) Proceedings—Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science 1887-1924.
- (4) *Speeches* by Lord Curzon—vol. III—Asutosh Collection.
- (5) Curzon's Private Papers—microfilms in National Archives.
- (6) Letters to Sir Asutosh Mukherjee (Asutosh Collection).
- (7) *Calcutta Review* July 1924.
- (8) *Bani Mandir*—Asutosh Number.

CHAPTER VI

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA 1914-1921

Asutosh Mookerjee was engaged in the great task of educational reorganization. He had assurances of sympathy and support from government. Lord Minto said in the Convocation of 12th March 1910 "Now that my high office is drawing to a close I rejoice to feel that the administration of this great university will continue to benefit from your distinguished ability and fearless courage." But after Minto's departure the attitude of the Government of India changed very rapidly. Sympathy and support gave place to opposition and hostility. In the Convocation speech of 1914 the Vice-Chancellor described the position as "confused and disheartening." He referred to the necessity under which "the advocate of revolutionary steps sees himself to challenge opposition, to hurt the feelings, possibly of the best of friends, to incur the risk of having his motives and aims misconceived and misinterpreted, to attack what are called vested rights and traditional privileges . . . sympathy has failed us in quarters where we had a right to demand it and where we confidently reckoned on it".

The change in the attitude of the Government of India affected the plans of Asutosh Mookerjee for the development of the University of Calcutta. Henry Sharp, who was Inspector of Schools and later Director

of Public Instruction, Eastern Bengal and Assam, became Joint Secretary to the Government of India in the department of education. His influence became dominant in the counsels of the Government of India in 1913. He did not forget that his erstwhile chief, Bamfylde Fuller, for whom he had full sympathy, had been worsted in a tussle with Asutosh Mookerjee. Harcourt Butler, Education member, was also opposed to Asutosh Mookerjee and his university reforms. Government policy—its character, its attitudes—depends very much within certain limits on personalities. Minto and Risley admired Asutosh Mookerjee. Hardinge was indifferent and his advisers were very hostile.

We now enter upon a period of controversy between the Government of India and the University of Calcutta. To put it differently it was a tussle between Butler and Sharp on the one hand and Asutosh Mookerjee on the other. The controversy is best described in the words of the records of the Government of India (Education—A June 1913 nos. 1-11 Education-A October 1913-19.9.'15):

From Asutosh Mookerjee, Vice-Chancellor:

“We have recently been organising regular classes for M.A. students. Last Saturday I made a statement to the Senate. It is enclosed for your perusal—

“As soon as this motion is carried provision will be made for post-graduate study in English, Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, Persian, Mental and Moral Philosophy,

History, Economics and Mathematics. In English we have five lecturers who deliver 20 lectures a week (4 of them from the Presidency College). In Sanskrit we may say without exaggeration that we have quite an army of competent lecturers, some of them very distinguished graduates and many of them the most distinguished pundits available in this country. In the case of Pali we have to depend upon Dr. Satis Chandra Vidyabhusan. In Arabic and Persian Shaikh Muhammad Gilani, Aga Kazim Shirazi of orthodox learning and Dr. Suhrawardy and Mr. Zahid who will place before them the researches of western scholars. In Mental and Moral Philosophy we have five lecturers who will give two lectures a week. In History we are practically able to cover the whole course—English history, history of the ancient east, and history of modern India while Mr. Rasul, Mr. Khuda Bux, Mr. Gupta, Mr. Basu, Mr. Jayaswal and Mr. Hafiz, who have taken their degrees either in Oxford or Cambridge, will deliver special lectures. In Economics we have the Minto Professor and special courses will be covered by Mr. Williams, Mr. Coyajee, Mr. Roy and Mr. Hafiz. In Pure mathematic we have four lecturers of considerable distinction—Dr. Mookerjee, Mr. Bramachari, Mr. Ganguly and Dr. Bagchi. They will deliver 34 lectures a week and they will be able to cover the whole of the compulsory course and at least two optional subjects.”

H. Sharp's note—"Can Rasul by any chance be our friend the Congresswala? . . . This arrangement for M. A. teaching is decidedly *Kutch*. The Vice-

Chancellor constantly speaks of things being sanctioned and settled before the Chancellor has approved. The way in which the European professors are thrown into the background is characteristic.

"Rasul, I learn, is the agitator Abdul Rasul, who is used by Surendranath Banerjee. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal appears to be a most objectionable person, who was connected with Bipin Chandra Pal, and V. D. Savarkar in England and who has recently been staying in Egypt and hobnobbing with the nationalists there. One wonders what sort of history lectures these gentlemen will give.

"Altogether Sir A. Mukherjee seems to have got hold of a funny crew. In this light we should examine the personnel of the Law College. I advise no action on this letter. We should carefully examine their names and disallow the appointment of any who are objectionable—whether such undesirables, notorious ones such as Dr. Suhrawardy and Mr. Rasul are to be appointed and to receive government pay?"

O. M. CREAGH

"The sooner the Calcutta University is pulled up the better."

R. W. CARLYLE

"A man in the position of a Vice-Chancellor has dared to put forward these names. We must veto their appointment. They will sow the seed of future anarchy while we are trying hard to root out the grown plant.

"If the V. C. knew the antecedents and senti-

ments of these men he is himself guilty. If he did not (and I do not believe this to be possible) then he has acted with a total disregard of his responsibility as to be unworthy of such a position of trust. The circumstances are such as to require his resignation."

R. H. CRADDOCK
5.1.13

"I will reserve my remarks until council. This action taken in this case must be part of a policy. Many men worse than these have been made much of by local governments."

Hardinge

The Government of India vetoed the appointment of Dr. Suhrawardy, Mr. Rasul and Mr. Jayaswal. Then the storm burst. The letter from Asutosh Mookerjee to the Education Secretary explained the position of the university:—

"If I interpret correctly the decision of the Government of India, the govt. desire me to see that in future the university does not nominate as lecturers persons actively engaged in political movement. I have publicly proclaimed it and I have been summarily overruled. About four years ago I asked the Government of India to accept this doctrine with regard to affiliated colleges and I met with prompt refusal. In 1909 when the Partition agitation was at its highest and I found that students were entangled in political agitation by persons closely connected with colleges

as teachers, lecturers or professors I made a demi-official representation on the subject and I enquired whether the government would be prepared to insist on complete abstention of all members on the staffs of colleges from political agitation. Sir Herbert Risley saw me and said the Government of India was not prepared to take such a drastic step. . . . I was sent for by Sir Edward Baker and I was peremptorily told that a general rule that all persons actively engaged in political movements should be excluded from appointment as lecturers could not be adopted or enforced. Sir Edward mentioned one instance which I still vividly recollect. It was the case of Mr. N. N. Ghosh, Principal of the Metropolitan Institution, who had throughout advocated moderation during the darkest period of the political agitation and added that action may be taken against agitators of an objectionable kind. . . . I pointed out that this might lead to invidious distinction and the university could not undertake to keep watch over the utterances of a large body of lecturers and to ascertain whether they had transgressed the bounds of propriety. Sir Edward had definitely made up his mind and arguments were of no use. . . . I found myself embarrassed because it soon got abroad that I had made the attempt and had failed. I was publicly ridiculed and there were veiled attacks on me in a certain section of the press that I was even more conservative than the government itself. I made another effort on the 12th March, 1910 at the Convocation in the presence of Lord Minto and Sir Edward Baker. I condemned the association of

teachers with political movements. Official life in India changes so fast that of the three members of the Executive Council of the Governor-general who were present on the occasion and two of whom congratulated me immediately after the Convocation for the bold stand I had made, only one (Mr. Sinha) is now in the country. It made me immediately unpopular with a large and influential section of my countrymen. My views were condemned in almost every Indian paper as retrograde and treacherous. I was shadowed by anarchists and was the recipient of numerous threatening letters.

"The view which I put forward in 1909 and 1910 is now the view of the Government of India. This result has been reached not by accepting my view but by overruling the recommendations of the Senate which had been made on the faith of the policy hitherto accepted by the Government of India . . . when the country is comparatively quieter. . . . Mr. Rasul was the only man available for International Law. He had specialised in it for a part of his B.C.L. course at Oxford. Dr. Suhrawardy is highly competent to teach Arabic from the standpoint of the western scholar, Mr. Jayaswal for Ancient Indian History specially Buddhist India . . . The appointments were made strictly from the academic point of view. Mr. Rasul and Mr. Suhrawardy are not regarded as men of importance in the political world . . . They have interested themselves in the matter of affording relief to wounded Turkish soldiers."

He pleaded ignorance in Jayaswal's case and

added that it was difficult enough to get suitable men. The task was made harder because men of apparent respectability had to take the risk of being thrown out by the Government of India.

Henry Sharp's note on this letter which was supported *ex silentio* by Sir H. Butler, Education Member, is characteristic. He made fun of injured innocence and then added, "Loyalty or disloyalty are to him very little as compared with power. The part which he played to the end of 1910 was a subtle one. He probably honestly began by wishing to cleanse institutions of political elements. His speech, which no doubt earned him some unpopularity at the beginning of 1910, may have been prompted by a doubt as to the attitude which would be taken by a new Viceroy. But the curious thing is that all the time while he was making these protestations he appears to have been putting every obstacle in the way of bringing home to misbehaving institutions the true enormity of their conduct. Whatever he said in principle he was in practice working against any real repression of political activity in schools. One is his very suspicious action in the case of Brojomohan Institution. The fact is, as I believe, he wanted to keep up an outward display of ultra loyalty but at the same time dare not jeopardise his influence in Calcutta". Henry Sharp communicated the decision of the Government of India vetoing the three appointments—"His Excellency does not consider it desirable to appoint as university lecturers men who have recently taken a prominent part in political move-

ments. An atmosphere of pure study should be fostered by all means in our power". The Senate discussed the matter on 5th July, 1913. Gurudas Banerjee, Bhupendranath Basu, and Rashbehari Ghose moved resolutions requesting the government to reconsider the decision pointing out that the Senate had no previous intimation of the new policy in respect of which the Senate had no opportunity of submitting its own views. They added, "This unqualified adoption of the principle will prejudicially affect the interest of education by depriving the university of the services of competent men in many instances." It is relevant to note that this resolution was seconded by the Rev. Mr. Milburn. He said, "There is good prima facie reason for supposing that government had taken a false step. It was going too far to restrict the liberty of men to the extent that was proposed in government letter. It was an unenglish thing to do. They were asked to acquiesce in the view that to take part in politics, even though the politics were of an innocent character, was a semi-criminal offence: that it was something which might not indeed bring down on the offender the terrors of the law but that in a number of roundabout ways the government would get at the offender and make him sorry he ever took part in it. They, Europeans there, were bound to consider that aspect of the case, to what extent liberty was right, to what extent repression was right". The resolution was carried by 34 votes to 2. In a long letter to the university on 23rd August 1923 Henry Sharp pointed out, "they cannot ignore the mischief which has already been

wrought among the pupils of certain schools and colleges in Bengal."

All this was perhaps unnecessary. But Henry Sharp had something of Fuller in him. The members of the Viceroy's Executive Council were unfortunately very stiff in their attitude. One of them wrote, "We have made liberal grants without imposing conditions. The university, as Mr. Sharp has clearly shown, has been insolent instead of gratified. It openly flouts us and it regards past subsidies merely as precedents for future demands." They now talked about a commission of enquiry. In a confidential note on some developments in the Calcutta University, Henry Sharp wrote, "The present government in Bengal have not always afforded us that help we might have looked for and certain troubles which we have had with the university are to be attributed partly to this attitude of the local government. What may be called the combative party in the university headed by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee has been quick to recognise this position and turn it to advantage. Sir Asutosh is much feared by the Bengal Government, is a *persona grata* with the Rector's private Secretary, and is able to bring considerable influence to bear."

Henry Sharp cited instances of the Vice-Chancellor's abuse of power. "It was decided that a whole-time and paid Vice-Chancellor was required for the job and that Mr. R. Nathan would be the best selection." The Secretary of State was addressed by the Government of India. The matter became known. He thought that the India Office was responsible for

the leakage. The result was that the proposal had to be withdrawn. Mr. Nathan's illness served as a colourable excuse. The term of Asutosh Mookerjee's Senate Fellowship as a nominated member expired. He was elected to the Senate by the constituency of registered graduates. "The Government of India had the greatest difficulty in avoiding being forced into the re-nomination of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee for a fifth term of office." Devaprosad Sarvadhikari was appointed Vice-Chancellor in 1914. But Asutosh Mookerjee continued to enjoy so much influence and authority in university affairs that all the attempts of Henry Sharp to check him failed. He wrote with regret, "We have to support the new Vice-Chancellor but he is wedded to ways which cannot be approved and either fears or is unable to strike any better line of his own." He added with regret, "Asutosh Mookerjee still looms so large in the eyes of the Government of Bengal (though) I think they have ceased to like him."

This is the story of a steady deterioration in the relations between the Government of India and the University which Asutosh Mookerjee dominated and controlled first as Vice-Chancellor, then from an almost equally influential position. The Government of India continued to harp on "the wonderful ingratitude displayed by the Calcutta University" and "the arrogant and overbearing attitude taken up by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee." Sir Asutosh Mookerjee referred to the piquant situation in the following words: "In more than one quarter, it has all at once been discovered that the existing universities cannot be usefully called

upon to effect reforms and enter upon higher functions, that these institutions are really quite incapable of fruitful development and they should at the utmost be allowed to move on the old lines while for all higher purposes entirely new universities are to be called into life." There was a call on one side for national universities, on another side for "true teaching and residential universities." This friction was very unfortunate for the development of the University of Calcutta. Henry Sharp wrote in a note on 29th April 1915 that the best policy would be "to deprive the university of financial assistance till it has brought some measure of reform. This is difficult, especially as some of our money goes on chairs named after the King and Lord Hardinge. Only method at present is financial pressure. We must absolutely refuse all further assistance. They must change the habit of evading regulations by appointing assistant lecturers and Asstt. professors." Harcourt Butler, Education Member, thus recorded his reaction on 4th October 1915—"The question is almost as much political as it is educational. The Bengalis of Calcutta are simply itching for a peg to hang their agitation on. The Bengal government can hardly be relied upon for consistent support. Mr. Lyon and Mr. Hornell cannot agree. Sir A. Mukherjee is an angry man who still has great influence in the university and he hates the Government of India very cordially. With Sir Asutosh Mukherjee all powerful we could have no enquiry into the university which will come to anything. The Bengal government suggested that Sir Asutosh should be on the committee . . . We have

removed some of Sir Asutosh's men from the Senate. The policy is bearing fruit". D. Anderson from Bombay was a new member of the Governor-General's Executive Council. He made some interesting remarks: "I know not Sir Asutosh but I always picture him as one very similar to Sir Pherozshah Mehta. The latter was at loggerheads with Sir George Clarke and in the opinion of many both lost their heads. Lord Willingdon established friendly relations with him and after a year or so made him Vice-Chancellor. I would suggest that Sir Asutosh should be given time to forget the violent animosities of the past. If not, I fear, the committee will be the centre of angry recriminations. Let sleeping dogs lie for a year. The work should be done better for waiting." But it became generally known that Asutosh Mookerjee was not opposed to a committee. He suggested "full and free interchange of views and opinions" about post-graduate teaching. Sankaran Nair became Education Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council. He was a great patriot. Things took a turn for the better. The Government of India now desired action and did not take delight in thwarting action. With the concurrence of the Government of Bengal the Government of India appointed a committee to enquire into post-graduate teaching in Calcutta. "The committee was to make suggestions whereby the existing expenditure and available resources for M.A. classes may be put to the best use." This Committee, with Asutosh Mookerjee as the Chairman, with European members forming the majority submitted a unanimous report.

Draft regulations were drawn up on the basis of the report. The dual system which prevailed—post-graduate classes in the university and M.A. and M.Sc. classes in two affiliated colleges in Calcutta was to give place to a single unified system. All available resources in Calcutta in a particular subject were to be coordinated. Academic matters concerning M.A. and M.Sc. studies were placed in the hands of two post-graduate councils, one in arts, the other in science with two executive bodies and a President in each of the two councils. The boards of higher studies were composed of teachers engaged in post-graduate work.

The opposition to this scheme was led by senators like Gurudas Banerjee and Bhupendra Nath Basu. The entire debate was on a very high plane. Many were unwilling to break with the traditions of the past. It was a herculean struggle. There was a prolonged debate. Honest differences of opinion were expressed with earnest conviction by two opposing schools of thought. As it was said the measure was urged along by the sheer driving force of the mover. He claimed that for this “fresh advance in the way of development of a teaching university at Calcutta the foundation had been silently and unobtrusively laid a few years earlier.” Resources available for higher teaching were now to form a single well-connected whole. He succeeded at long last in establishing a centralized post-graduate system of study and research. The new regulations received the sanction of the Governor-General in council on 26 June, 1917. The machinery was very rapidly constituted and the system came into

operation from September 1917. Asutosh Mookerjee became President of the Post-graduate Council in Arts and President of the Post-graduate Council in Science. He hoped to create a real centre of learning and research. One hundred years after the foundation of Hindu College, these new foundations were laid.

The Government of India made an announcement of the policy to appoint a commission for the University of Calcutta on 6 July, 1917. The Commission was constituted on 14 September, 1917 "to enquire into the condition and prospects of the University of Calcutta and to consider the question of a constructive policy in relation to the questions which it presents . . . the best expert opinion upon the present requirements of university instruction and organisation". The Chairman was Sir Michael Sadler and one of the seven members was Asutosh Mookerjee. The Sadler Commission report has been described as a monument of academic wisdom. The Chancellor of the University said, "Your university may well be proud that it has been selected, so to speak, as the text of what I prophesy will pass down to future generations as one of the weightiest of educational sermons ever preached." Asutosh Mookerjee did not sign any note of dissent. He could perceive the defects of his system and he wished to amend it if he could get an opportunity. Lord Carmichael had said in 1914, "He has aimed at getting something done and getting something done quickly. I have talked with Sir Asutosh about university development and he has told me more than once that if he could set up his ideal and

work for it, it might be very different from the ideal which has been set up for him and for which he has had to work."

It is difficult for us to assess the personal contribution of Asutosh Mookerjee to this very valuable report. We know that before the appointment of Sir Sankaran Nair there was a discussion about constituting a commission to examine the affairs of the university. The desire to keep him out of it was expressed in very emphatic language. It was suggested that "None who has been a party to the production of the present state of affairs in the university should be on the commission" (note written by H. Sharp on 17.9.'15). H. C. Butler who was Education Member before Sir Sankaran Nair, wrote, "with Sir Asutosh Mukherjee all powerful we could have no enquiry into the university which will come to anything. The Bengal Government suggested that Sir Asutosh should be on the committee and the V.C. should not. The local government should be told that the affairs of the Calcutta university should be radically improved before the university is handed over. The difficulties of the retention can be overcome by a flanking movement at Dacca and realisation of the Dacca scheme must form part of the movement in Calcutta." Butler was happy to find that the Senate was beginning to quarrel among themselves. He added, "I do believe that an atmosphere is growing up and we must not force the pace" (Butler's note 4.10.'15).

Sir Sankaran Nair changed this attitude of the Government of India but not entirely. Henry Sharp

was still there. When the Senate Committee was constituted by the Government of India to consider the question of post-graduate studies we find European members in overwhelming strength on the committee. Henry Sharp always thought of university matters from the angle of Europeans vs. Indians. But surprisingly enough their report was unanimous. It must have been one of the greatest surprises of the life of Henry Sharp when he found that Hornell, who as Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, had written at such length against the Calcutta University and W. C. Wordsworth, who was expected as Principal of the Presidency College to disagree with the schemes of centralisation of post-graduate studies, did not disagree with Asutosh Mookerjee. It is the greatest tribute to the ability of this great man to win over opponents by proving his honesty and sincerity. He could convince people by the cogency of his arguments. The appointment of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee as a member of the Sadler Commission undoubtedly helped to make the report so authoritative.

Every morning Asutosh Mookerjee used to have long walks on the maidan. We have heard that Sir Michael Sadler used to join him and they would discuss evidence, arguments, conclusions and drafts. The report, as it emerged, expressed its appreciation of Asutosh Mookerjee's aims and objectives. About the Regulations, drafted by the small committee over which he had presided, the Sadler Commission writes, "It was a great labour, a thorough, careful and honest attempt to carry in detail the principles of the Act."

On the dispute regarding the appointment of Rasul, Suhrawardy, Jayaswal there is an oblique reference—“A university which deserves that name ought to be so constituted that it can be trusted to carry on its purely academic affairs without constant interference.” It expressed its appreciation of the new system for which Asutosh Mookerjee was responsible which introduced a stricter and more systematic regulation of the colleges, new rules of affiliation etc. Finally the Commission reported, “The remarkable expansion of post-graduate teaching under the direct auspices of the university showed that the resources were greater than had been supposed. It set in some respects new standards of method in university teaching. Taken in conjunction with the concurrent reorganization of colleges and with the attempt to deal with the problems of students’ residence it represents an expenditure of labour and thought so great and a skill in organisation so considerable as to inspire solid hopes for the future.” Asutosh Mookerjee could not but be in agreement with them that an effective synthesis between college and university was still undiscovered and the problems of high school training and organisation were unresolved.

Between 1914 and 1921 he was not the Vice-Chancellor. But during these years he created the post-graduate department, controlled its activities and devoted his super-abundant energies to the furtherance of research and the encouragement of scholarship. The Sadler Commission noted that for post-graduate teaching in Arts the university’s budget in 1917-1918 was

only Rs. 3,50,000 of which government share amounted only to Rs. 51,000 (36,000 for three chairs in economics, mathematics and philosophy and 15,000 for university lecturers). From tuition fees there was an income of Rs. 1,10,400 and the balance of Rs. 1,88,960 was paid from university funds. For post-graduate teaching in Science the budget amounted to Rs. 3,95,151 of which government contribution was only Rs. 12,000 for the upkeep of the Palit laboratory. From Palit and Ghosh endowments income was Rs. 87,795 and 71,200 respectively. Tuition fees amount to Rs. 20,160. The balance, paid from university funds, amounted to Rs. 2,03,994.

The university was thus dependent on the surplus of examination fees, a very unhealthy state of things, leading indirectly perhaps to a cheapening of standards. As Gurudas Banerjee said in his criticism of the new set-up "It was robbing Peter to pay Paul." Asutosh Mookerjee was perhaps inclined to submit most questions of university reform to one test—their effect upon the post-graduate department. His object was the motto of the university—Advancement of learning—and he was made to depend upon the fee fund. The question was naturally asked whether this was the reason for a lowering of standards. The matriculation examination as conducted by the university as a test of fitness for entering the university was considered by eleven out of every twelve witnesses before the Sadler Commission as "too easy". This policy was perhaps forced upon him by the government. We get an idea of the attitude of the govern-

ment to the work of the university in the letter written by Hardinge to Carmichael on 14 July, 1915. "The financial condition of the university must be fully investigated, not with reference to its future needs or the making of future grants but with a view to finding out the utility—(what we have never obtained) a clear but exhaustive explanation of its position."

There was this government attitude of denial. But Asutosh Mookerjee would not have adopted this means for finding money for post-graduate teaching if he had regarded this policy as injurious to the country. He shared with G. K. Gokhale the view that under the circumstances the diffusion of even slight knowledge over a multitude of minds was of the utmost importance. He had a belief in western education and he thought an easier system of examination would help its diffusion. It would thus penetrate way-side village and old inert minds would be shaken out of their lethargy and superstition. A very rigid test would not serve this purpose. The ideal of higher education did not suffer and there was great expansion. He argued that "if students were turned away from classes VII and VIII would it have been better." G. K. Gokhale said once, "I think and this is a matter of the deepest conviction with me that in the present circumstances of India all western education is valuable and useful. Even if it is not the highest it is not on that account to be rejected . . . in my mind the greatest work of western education in the present day is not so much the encouragement of learning as the liberation of the

Indian mind from the thralldom of old world ideas and the assimilation of what is best in the life and thought and character of the west. For this purpose not only the highest but all western education is useful."

But Asutosh Mookerjee wanted also intellectual equality with the west at the top level. Here, as an organiser of higher studies, he was at his incomparable best. The policy was to establish university chairs in important subjects to be filled by the best men available who would by their example awaken in some of their pupils the thirst for exploring new fields of knowledge. Some of the appointments have already been referred to. Professor Brojendra Nath Seal's successor as George V Professor of Mental and Moral philosophy was Professor Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. Professor Young's successor as Hardinge Professor of Higher Mathematics was Professor C. E. Cullis, from 1917 to 1922. After him came Professor Ganesh Prasad. He was serving as Rashbehari Ghosh Professor of Applied Mathematics before he became Hardinge Professor of Higher Mathematics. He was succeeded by Professor S. K. Banerjee as Rashbehari Ghosh Professor of Applied Mathematics. Professor Phanindra Nath Ghosh was appointed to the chair of applied physics in 1920. Abanindra Nath Tagore was appointed Bagiswari Professor of Indian Fine Arts in 1921. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee became Guruprasad Singh Professor of Indian Linguistics and Phonetics, Jnanendra Nath Mukherjee was appointed Guruprasad Singh Professor of Chemistry. Robert Knox was

appointed Professor of English, but later, when he went to Europe during the First World War, was succeeded by Professor Henry Stephen. Professor Otto Straus served as Professor of comparative philology from 1913 to 1915. He was succeeded by I. J. S. Taraporewala. P. Bruehl was appointed University Professor of Botany in 1918. Satyendranath Bose and Meghnad Saha as young University lecturers, shed lustre on the university by their researches in higher mathematics.

The list is long enough. But what deserves to be specially noticed is the interest which the great organizer took in the activity of the younger research workers who were sent by him as travelling fellows abroad. They regularly corresponded with him and reported their reactions from abroad. In the Asutosh collection in the National Library there is a letter written by Meghnad Saha to Asutosh Mookerjee on May 19, 1921. He wrote that he was in Gottingen in the company of a friend and he would return to Berlin after a few days. In Gottingen he saw the famous geophysical laboratory of Professor Wiechert where earthquake waves were registered. The observatory was founded by the celebrated scientist Gauss. A letter from Meghnad Saha dated March 16, 1921, to the Editor of the Calcutta Review contains a copy of the opinion of Einstein on the work of Meghnad Saha. It was translated from German into English. Einstein wrote, "Dr. M. N. Saha has won an honoured name in the whole scientific world by his investigation on the thermodynamical and optical behaviour of elements at high temperatures.

These works open a new way for a more exact understanding of the physical conditions prevailing in stellar atmospheres. In the interests of science it is urgently desired that Dr. Saha be enabled to continue his investigation". There are some letters from Dr. Nilratan Dhar from London on personal matters. There is one very significant letter written by late Professor Sisir Kumar Mitra from Paris dated 22 November 1921. "I must admit that I was rather disappointed at the attitude of the Professors in London at any rate. They will only allow you to work in their laboratory if they know that some of the drudge work can be done by you and won't show much sympathy if you intend starting work on your own account. Of course there are honourable exceptions . . . the general attitude of people in England is, I think, due to the fact that they are beginning to grow jealous of the output of work from India and also to some extent due to the large influx of students there from India and it is, I think, high time that we should direct our students to the great continental universities where there are ample facilities for higher studies in every branch of science."

Comparative philology, anthropology and experimental psychology were included in the list of subjects for teaching and research. This opened up new vistas and expanding horizons. Teaching and research in such subjects as Pali and Islamic studies began and their rightful claims were recognised though they were not popular subjects. Asutosh said in 1922, "the term Sanskrit though composed of only eight letters con-

notes in the domain of knowledge an empire by itself—literature, Vedas, law and science of interpretation, Vedanta, Sankhya, and Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisheshika, general philosophy, prakrit and epigraphy.” Islamic studies according to him included theology, philosophy, literature, rhetoric, politics, grammar and science. In the interest of Tibetan studies he invited one of the profoundest scholars from Tibet Geshe Lobzong Targe. He was anxious to carry the horizon of India beyond her present limits. He added, “It is distinctly unfortunate that we should be blamed for the arrangements we have made for those very subjects which are indispensable for study and research in a truly national university.” The department of Indian Languages was opened in 1917. The languages which were recognised as subsidiary languages were Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Sinhalese. Principal languages were Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati and Oriya. The cultivation of Bengali language and literature was begun on an extensive scale. In the Pali department there were Ceylonese monks. For Islamic studies there were Persian scholars. For comparative philology there was a Gujarati scholar, for history a Marathi scholar, in the economics department there was a Telugu scholar, in the department of anthropology there was a Tamil and Malayalam scholar. The barriers of provincialism were thus broken. He spoke with great fervour: “Blame us not if we deem it inconsistent with our national consciousness that the first and last words, the final and definite judgments on Indian civilization, should be pronounced

in intellectual centres far beyond the limits of our mother land." For higher scientific studies he was anxious to learn all that the west had to teach and he was anxious that promising young men should go to those centres of research where men were working with tireless energy and a fervent passion for new views of nature. He sent them to Göttingen, Berlin, Paris, London and Cambridge. The steady progress of science and the acquisition of new knowledge and awareness of new problems could thus be ensured. His motto might have been like this—learn science from the west and teach them all that the east with its storied past can teach.

He admired the universities of Germany for the admirable way in which they combined the functions of teaching and original research. He said in 1911 that this "exalts and ennobles teaching and enormously stimulates and facilitates research". He also admired them for the width of their intellectual interest. "They have taken for their province the whole of nature and the whole of humanity." He was grateful to them for their work in the field of Indian studies. The British pioneers Sir William Jones, H. T. Colebrooke, Charles Wilkins, Horace Hayman Wilson, James Prinsep opened up the road, but the full significance of oriental studies, he felt, was being realized in Germany.

It would perhaps be proper to draw attention to two of his great pioneering activities in the field of higher education—institution of M.A. degree in the vernacular literatures of India and arrangements for the cultivation and advancement of science, pure and

applied. Bipin Chandra Pal writes in his *Character Study* about the institution of M.A. degree in Indian vernacular literatures. "It is possible the idea has gradually developed in his mind. Whether it is the result of his statesman like foresight and was at the back of the idea with which he introduced the first reform in this direction in 1906, or whether he has gradually stumbled upon it, no one perhaps except Sir Asutosh can definitely say." In *Asutosh Smriti Katha* Dinesh Chandra Sen reveals the working of the mind of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. The Vice-Chancellor asked him and his co-workers to write treatises on Vaisnava lyrics, rural songs, history of Bengali literature etc. They were not told anything about his ultimate aim. The vernacular literatures had pined in the cold shade of official disdain. Indians with the attitude of Englishmen, as also some leading Sanskritists, shared the official view. After the publication of some works on Bengali literature by Dinesh Chandra Sen and his co-workers, Asutosh Mookerjee asked him to make arrangements for post-graduate teaching in Bengali. Dr. Sen was taken by surprise. His surprise was enhanced when Asutosh Mookerjee assured him that the work already done by him and his associates would help in making a good start. Dinesh Chandra Sen writes that the capacity of Asutosh Mookerjee to keep his cherished ideas to himself was in a flash revealed to him. Typical selections facilitated advanced study of Indian vernaculars—Bengali, Hindi, Guzarati, Oriya and Assamese.

In the field of science and technology government

policy of denial was clearly discernible. Higher science teaching did not perhaps appear to government to be consistent with their view of manufacturing "loyal citizens". Asutosh Mookerjee was determined to do all he could. He instinctively felt that his countrymen of all shades of opinion would agree with him. He therefore made his comprehensive plan generally known—a residential college, advanced instruction and research work. The professors were to carry on original research in their special subjects with a view to extending the bounds of knowledge and to improving by the application of their researches the arts, industries, manufacture and agriculture of the country. They were to stimulate and guide research by advanced students and generally to assist them in post-graduate work so as to foster the growth of real learning.

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CHAPTER VII

LAST YEARS: APRIL 1921—MAY 1924.

The University of Calcutta was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Government of Bengal in 1921. With the approval of the new Governor-General, Lord Ronaldshay, the new Governor of Bengal, offered the Vice-Chancellorship again to Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. During the intervening period Sir Devaprasad Sarvadhikari (31st March 1914 to 30th March 1918), Sir Lancelot Sanderson (31st March 1918 to 30th March 1919) and Sir Nilratan Sircar (31st March, 1919 to 3rd April 1921) had successively served as Vice-Chancellors. The two Indian Vice-Chancellors had walked in the footsteps of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee and his ascendancy in university affairs was never shaken. He guided university policy as before. His hands were further strengthened by his re-appointment in 1921. In this context it would perhaps be relevant to give an excerpt from Arthur Brown's letter dated Simla January 31, 1921. Arthur Brown was university Professor of International Law from 1920 to 1923. He wrote, "Regarding the V. C. I assure you that I did not speak from idle rumour but upon absolutely reliable authority and there is no possibility of a mistake. The Bengal Governor has proposed your name to the Viceroy. I have no information as to what is happening to the proposal up here. Perhaps you will allow me to say that I may have been of some service to you in giving

you the news . . . In the Government of India, people come and go. In the University of Calcutta you will, I hope, go on for ever. Relatively at all events time will bring its changes—and its revenges. I am deeply concerned to see that you take such a gloomy view as to the injury inflicted upon higher education by recent events. I can only hope that sooner or later you will dictate the educational policy and system in Bengal.” Asutosh Mookerjee, as Sir Michael Sadler put it, “feared and hated anarchy.” When the Non-Cooperation movement began he regarded the desertion of schools by 50,000 students in Bengal as a national calamity. He looked with horror upon students forsaking the books for the loudspeaker. The wastage of the younger boys who were rendered idle, whose education was interrupted, in the case of some perhaps brought to an end, made him very sad. In their case he felt that the time lost could hardly if ever be made up. He thought that the effect on the boys in the schools would be calamitous. With regard to three or four thousand college students who cut short their educational career he assured himself that they had at least qualified themselves upto Matriculation or Intermediate standard. The number of students in recognised schools was reduced by 22 per cent. The number of candidates at the matriculation examination was reduced by 20 per cent. The financial loss to the University was difficult to repair. The stability of the post-graduate department was threatened. One-third of the fee fund was allocated to post-graduate teaching under the rules. He feared that it would be

sometime before the people recovered their balance of mind.

Announcing the appointment of Asutosh Mookerjee as Vice-Chancellor on March 24, 1921 in his Convocation address Lord Ronaldshay said, "No one surely is better qualified so to mould the future of your university as to make it a national university in the best and truest meaning of the word." Asutosh Mookerjee accepted responsibility in this crisis and he hoped that the government would give him full financial support. Ronaldshay saw visions of a modern Nalanda but his administration did nothing to relieve the financial condition of the university. The education ministry of the Government of Bengal found fault with the University for its policy of "thoughtless expansion." The University was faced with a total deficit of over five lakhs of rupees and the post-graduate teachers were not getting their salary for several months. This was the position in July, 1922.

Asutosh Mookerjee laid the foundations of a teaching and research university which he hoped would be the pride not only of Bengal but of all India. Advanced teaching and research in twenty-two subjects was considered by his critics as too much under the circumstances. But he was very conscious of the "need for a broadbased education amongst a people advancing with rapid strides". He, therefore, deplored the criticism directed against those departments where the students were necessarily limited in number—subjects which were indispensable for study and research in a truly national university. In eloquent words he

explained. "A university designed for the service of a nation in all possible phases of development cannot be restricted to a narrow or chosen teaching. It cannot be treated either as a great scholastic sanctuary or as a glorified teaching institute." A speech delivered by him in Lucknow in January, 1924 should be read in the context of tense relations between the government and the university in 1922 and 1923. He referred to a distinguished legislator's complaint against the appointment of a Professor of Pali. The legislator said that those who took the degree would not earn even rupees five a month. He added, "we will have none to advance the boundary of human knowledge except chemists and blacksmiths." There was mounting opposition inside the legislature as also in the periodical press. The Government of Bengal informed the University that a grant of financial assistance of Rs. 2,50,000 would be subject to eight conditions. This implied so much distrust and so much interference, they were so humiliating and so glaringly derogatory that Asutosh Mookerjee, who presided over the debate in the Senate, asked them to reject them outright. He said, "We shall not be a part of the Secretariat." He ended a justly celebrated speech with an impassioned appeal for freedom. This was on 2nd December, 1922. His last Convocation address contained a quotation from Lord Rosebery's address as Chancellor of the University of Glasgow. "We do not take much or even ask much from the state. But the state invites us everyday to lean upon it." Relations with the government were very tense. The climax was reached when

Lord Lytton, as Chancellor of the University, offered him Vice-Chancellorship for another term on certain conditions. A more tactless and insulting letter could not possibly have been drafted. It was an error of judgment which could not have been made outside a tradition conducive to it. He wrote, "Hitherto you have given me no help. You have misrepresented our objects and motives and instead of coming to me as your friend and Chancellor with helpful suggestions for the improvement of our bill you have inspired articles in the press to discredit the government. You have appealed to Sir Michael Sadler, to the Government of India and the Government of Assam to oppose the bill. . . . If you can give an assurance that you will not work against the Government or seek the aid of other agencies to defeat our bill then I am prepared to ask the concurrence of my Minister to your re-appointment as Vice-Chancellor." The University bill referred to wanted to secure the supremacy of the Minister of Education in University affairs. It flouted the principles formulated by the Sadler Commission.

The reply of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was characteristic. He wrote, "You could not possibly have forgotten that in the letter which I wrote to you on the 4th November, 1922 after I had received a copy of the University Bill from Mr. Mitter, I expressed in unmistakable terms my disapproval of the contents and principles underlying it. That bill came upon me as an absolute surprise. Mr. Mitter had told you that the Senate of the University had been consulted officially but that my personal opinion had not been invited.

This, as I intimated to you later, was the exact opposite of the truth. This was followed by protracted correspondence and interviews with you in the course of which I explained to you my views upon the draft bill. At length on the 11th January, 1923 you gave me permission to consult the members of the Senate on the provisions of the Bill. At about the same time I received from you a copy of the Secondary Education Bill; all information regarding its contents though repeatedly asked for, had been kept back by the Government from the University. The Senate, thus placed in possession of the two bills, appointed a committee to report on their provisions. Before the views of the University could be formulated and communicated to you, you adopted, inspite of my earnest protests and the remonstrance of the Senate, an absolutely indefensible course. You forwarded the Bill or bills to the Government of India with a view to obtaining its sanction to introduce them into the Legislative Council. If you refer to the correspondence, you will find that I and my colleagues on the Senate made a desperate effort to convince you that as the Bills were open to grave objections they should not be adopted as government measures before full and searching enquiry. Our appeals and protests were totally disregarded. You now make a grievance that I have used every expedient to oppose your government to arrest the progress of these measures. You complain that I have appealed to the Government of India and the Government of Assam. You will be surprised to hear that what I have done is perfectly constitutional. In your letter

dated the 11th January 1923 you stated explicitly that I would be free to take what steps I pleased to discuss the bill with the members of the Senate. In my reply dated the 14th January, 1923, I stated that in view of the importance of the questions raised, I had decided to give an opportunity to every member of the Senate to discuss the provisions of the Bills. The Senate, it may not be known by you, includes his Excellency the Governor of Assam, the Member of the Council of the Governor-General in charge of the Department of Education, the Minister of Education in Assam and the Director of Public Instruction in Assam. The papers were forwarded as confidential documents to each of these gentlemen. If I had withheld the papers from them they would have been entitled to make legitimate grievance against me. If the result has been that they have formed an unfavourable opinion of the measures devised by your government and have taken such steps as they considered necessary and proper, you may regret it but surely that is not a ground for complaint against me. You also make a grievance that I have appealed to Sir Michael Sadler. Your government, notwithstanding my advice and the advice of the Senate, has uncere- moniously rejected the recommendations made by the Commission over whose deliberations Sir Michael Sadler presided. If I had intimated this fact to Sir Michael Sadler—a fact which has been a matter of public knowledge for many weeks past, I did it in the best interests of the university and of the country. Again, you do not hesitate to assert that I have inspired

articles in the press to discredit your government. This is a libel and I challenge you to produce evidence in support of this unfounded allegation.

“You complain that my criticisms have been destructive rather than constructive. Yes, the criticism has been destructive of the provisions of the bills which appeared to me and to my colleagues in the Senate, to be most objectionable, framed, as we did not hesitate to record, from a political and not an educational standpoint. You seem to regret that our criticisms have not been constructive but you have never cared to invite the university to frame a constructive scheme for the benefit of your government. I have, on more than one occasion, as you will no doubt recollect, offered to draw up a bill with the assistance of my colleagues in the Senate and representatives of your government—but I have received no response. I have written to you letter after letter—even in the midst of terrible sorrows—commenting in detail on the provisions of the Bills. You have never cared to reply to the criticisms thus expressed. On the other hand, although I find from your letter dated 11th January, 1923, that you were convinced that the proposed amendments were, as predicted by me, impossible of accomplishment in our amending Bill, I discovered much to my surprise a few days later that you were determined to push on the amending Bill and send it up to the Government of India for sanction. Again, the Report of the Committee on the two Bills (which we took great pains to prepare) minutely criticised their clauses and challenged the ideal that

lay beneath them. You have never recorded our opinion or our views. You have not even given me an opportunity to discuss the report with you. On the other hand, I cannot overlook that your letter to me dated 15th February, 1923 made it quite clear that You did not realise the gravity of the views and you did not hesitate to express your impatience at the space that our criticisms occupied. I notice that you charge me with having misrepresented your objects and motives. I most emphatically repudiate the charge. . . . If you have the courage to publish to the world all the documents on the subject and the entire correspondence which has passed between us, I shall cheerfully accept the judgment of an impartial public.

"I shall finally consider your offer to re-appoint me as Vice-Chancellor subject to a variety of conditions. There are expressions in your letter which imply that I am an applicant for the post and I am in expectation of re-appointment. Let me assure you that if you and your Minister are under such an impression, you are entirely mistaken. You ask me to give you a pledge that I shall exchange an attitude of opposition for one of whole-hearted assistance. You are not apparently acquainted with the traditions of the high office which I have held for ten years. . . . Let me assure you that this high tradition was not created by me. It was my privilege to work as a member of the Syndicate with eight successive Vice-Chancellors during a period of seventeen years before I was called upon to accept that post and most, if not all of them, were eminent men imbued with the tradi-

tions of the office from the time of their predecessors. Many of the occupants have been men who had taken oath to administer justice in the name of their sovereign. To them, it would have been a matter of astonishment to be told that as Vice-Chancellors they were expected to adapt themselves to the views of the government simply because it was the government which had the appointment in its gift. I have, I maintain, scrupulously adhered to the cherished traditions of my office and it has never entered into my mind during the last two years that I was seriously expected to adapt myself to the wishes of your government . . . I have not, in the remotest degree tried to please you or your minister. But I claim that I have acted throughout in the best interests of the University notwithstanding formidable difficulties and obstacles and that I have uniformly tried to save your government from the pursuit of a radically wrong course though my advice had not been heeded. I am not surprised that neither you nor your minister can tolerate me. It may not be impossible for you to secure the services of a subservient Vice-Chancellor, prepared always to carry out the mandates of your government and to act as a spy on the Senate. He may enjoy the confidence of your government but he will not certainly enjoy the confidence of the Senate and the public of Bengal. We shall watch with interest the performances of a Vice-Chancellor of this type, creating a new tradition for the office.

"I send you without hesitation the only answer which an honorable man can send—an answer which

you and your advisers expect and desire. I decline the insulting offer you have made to me.”*

Asutosh Mookerjee was succeeded by Bhupendra Nath Basu. In the first Senate meeting over which the new Vice-Chancellor presided Asutosh Mookerjee offered him cordial welcome on behalf of the Senate. In his reply addressing Asutosh Mookerjee he said, “You, Sir, have built for us a temple, which, whatever may be the fault in its execution, is grand in design and conception and which will for ever command respect and admiration of our country and of succeeding ages. You have devoted to it—industry, ability, genius and, above all, a love for the youth of our country, which none can excel and few can emulate. I shall frankly confess, notwithstanding your words of encouragement, that I feel somewhat diffident when I find that I have to follow in your footsteps in the task, which I have undertaken.”

Asutosh Mookerjee was for 34 years connected with the University of Calcutta, guiding its course successively as a member of the Senate and the Syndicate (1889-1906), as Vice-Chancellor (1906-1914), as the most influential member of the Syndicate and the Senate (1906-1917), as President of the councils of Post-graduate Teaching in arts and science (1917-1921)

* These two bills were for the reform of the University and the creation of a Board of Secondary education. There was no provision for financial assistance to the University. The entire correspondence between Sir Asutosh Mookerjee and Lord Lytton has not been officially published. I could not find these papers. But this letter written by Sir Asutosh gives us a summary of the contents of this correspondence.

then again as Vice-Chancellor and President of the two councils of Post-graduate Teaching (1921-1923). In the last years of his life he was still predominant in university affairs as President of the two councils and as the most influential member of the Senate and Syndicate.

He keenly felt how much handicapped the university was because of the unwillingness of the government to help in removing India's inferiority in the domains of higher studies and research. "Limited means, unfavourable surroundings, unsuitable buildings and intermittent opportunities" still hindered his efforts. He created a new tradition, a new environment and a new atmosphere. But he could not bring to the government an awareness of the fact that higher education is necessarily costly. He said in 1922, "The university has found it possible to contribute more than ten lakhs out of capital and recurring expenditure of 16 lakhs hitherto incurred in connection with the establishment and maintenance of the University College of Science and Technology. What about the guardians of the public treasury?—Permission to divert to the use of the College of Science a sum of one thousand rupees a month which had been originally meant for other purposes."

He was a great admirer of the university system of Germany and German academic traditions. It must not be forgotten that German educational ideals rested upon a social and political necessity. The University of Berlin was founded in the darkest hour of Prussia's history. Von Humboldt said on the foundation of the

University of Berlin after the battle of Jena, "The state like the private citizen always acts wisely when in times of misfortune it uses its efforts to do something looking to its future good." Heidelberg, and Gottingen, Leipzig and Berlin could make such great progress because they received so much aid from the government that it enabled them to seize new opportunities for systematic expansion of knowledge. But here in India the build-up was British. Considerations which dominated state's relations with universities were so very different. Lord Lytton, as Chancellor of the University, said that the University was primarily "a great human factory and I am anxious to see that it supplies the commodity which is most required." This bureaucratic tradition proved to be very powerful. Even in a new set-up, after Mantague-Chelmsford reforms, with an Indian minister in charge of education in Bengal, there was little change. The letter written by Lytton as Chancellor marked only the climax of a spirit of opposition which Asutosh Mookerjee felt he could surmount only if he could capture the machinery of administration. In confidential government communications the Dacca University scheme was described as a "flanking movement against the University of Calcutta." The University of Dacca started functioning from 1 July, 1921. The extremist politicians were describing existing universities as non-national, *Golamkhanas* or manufactories of slaves.

Asutosh's personal relations with Provas Chandra Mitter, the Bengal Minister of education, were far

from friendly. He was now convinced that he must pursue a new line of action. The letter of Lord Lytton was so outrageously insulting that Bengal was shocked. Indian reaction was not different. Everywhere people felt that these were the terms on which government wanted the people to cooperate. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee and Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das were thinking of a joint measure of opposition. Sir Michael Sadler wrote to him that he should give India the benefit of his political lead and guidance. William Archbold, who was for a long time an influential European member of the Senate, wrote to him from England (20th February, 1924) "What you require is a strong bureaucracy almost entirely Indian in composition. . . . India for long years will live by administration and from what I hear the administration is growing weaker everyday. Now it is only a man in your position and with your authority who can form a centre party who can check this tendency." Madhu Sudhan Das, the Orissa leader, who had been his teacher in his boyhood days, wrote to him on 3rd January, 1924 about the necessity of his joining politics. He referred to the letter of Sir Michael Sadler. "An agreement between the lowest and the topmost ranks in the ladder of intellectual gradation justifies a presumption in favour of uniformity in the favour of intermediate steps. I fully realize the truth and force of your remark that it will be sometime before the people recover their balance of mind. What the country wants is practical problems to work at, demanding immediate application. This is the only cure for an imagination fired by wild projects. The

idea of C. R. Das is to enter the council with a view to "mend it or end it" as the nationalist cry goes. If he can be induced to take up industry with a view to end the industrial control in the country by government by developing Indian interest in industry he will be a gain to our cause. So long as we are under a foreign rule our avowal of the ultimate object is suicidal."

Official correspondence between Malcolm Hailey and James Crear throws some light on the plans of Sir Asutosh in 1923. A Simla letter from Hailey to Crear dated 17th June, 1923 is significant in this context. Malcolm Hailey wrote, "I enclose a letter from Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee. I shall be much obliged if you will let me have the confidential report referred to and also let me know if we have at any time laid down anything on the subject of political activity by Judges."

The letter from S. N. Banerjee quotes a confidential report on the political situation in Bengal for the second half of April, 1923. "As regards the seats which will be contested at the forthcoming elections to the council, Mr. C. R. Das is said to have come to an arrangement with Sir Asutosh Mukherjee who will himself lead a party based on the Calcutta University question."

"Statements to the same effect have appeared in some of the newspapers. Now my point is—whether a High Court Judge while still sitting on the bench should be permitted to lend his influence to political parties actively engaged in canvassing for seats in the

Bengal Legislative Council and to be associated with them in their political activities. It seems to me that this is a case in which, if the facts have been correctly stated in the above report, the Government of India should intervene. It is more or less open secret in Bengal and candidates have been named whom Sir Asutosh Mukherjee is backing. Should a High Court Judge, while still performing his judicial duties, be allowed to do so?"

Sd/- S. N. Banerjee.

"It was said in this connection that the Government Servants Conduct rules have been held to apply to High Court Judges—Vide the case of Sir Sankaran Nair who was held to have broken rule 19 by contributing a criticism of Govt. policy in the Modern Review or the case of Mr. Justice Beaman due to his contributing an article on the situation in India in the Empire Review. In a recent case Secretary will recollect that Sir Grimwood Mears has tacitly assumed that the rules apply. The case, however, of Mr. Justice Sadasiva Aiyer is more pertinent in that in his case the question of the undesirability of High Court Judges taking part in political movements was definitely considered. The matter was referred to the Secretary of State who held in his despatch that a breach of rule 21 (now 22) of the conduct rules had been committed and suggested that the several High Courts should be informed of the failure to observe injunctions contained in this rule.

The immediate question is the reply to be made to Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee ; the next what action, if any, shall be taken on the allegation."

H. M.

"I took the precaution of writing to Sir S. Banerjee a non-committal reply saying that I might perhaps write to him later on the subject. His letter is marked "private and confidential." We could not take action on it unless we have reason to believe that the facts are correct. Sir Sundrenath Banerjee is for this purpose much in the same position as a member of the public, who makes complaints on personal and political grounds. The first thing is to see if the matter has been referred to in the papers."

Sd/- M. Hailey.

"The cuttings recorded in this office as well as the old files of all available Calcutta newspapers have been looked up. Only one cutting reporting that Sir Asutosh Mukherjee will fight the elections could be traced ; and that is placed below."

30.6.1923.

"I was in Calcutta for the better part of May and June and although I heard a good deal of talk about a pact between Sir Asutosh Mookerjee and Mr. C. R. Das I did not see any statement to that effect in the newspapers. Nor did I see any statement in the press that Sir Asutosh was helping any candidates for the

next elections. It was, of course, a subject of common talk that he would himself seek election."

Bajpai.

Private and confidential

Home Department
(Political)

Simla the 12th July, 1923.

"Dear Sir Surendranath,

"As I promised in acknowledging your letter of the 12th June, I write again in the matter which you referred to me, namely, the propriety of a High Court Judge while still sitting on the bench being permitted to lend his influence to political parties canvassing for seats in the Bengal Legislative Council.

"I have no doubt, on the question of principle, that such an action would be irregular and if facts demonstrated that any judge was doing this it would be necessary for Govt. to take the matter up. In regard to the particular case you mention, however, I had not been able to obtain any confirmation of the confidential report on the political situation in Bengal to which you refer me. I have examined the press and I have found nothing on the fact as is known that Sir Asutosh Mukherjee will be the central figure of the Independent Liberal Party.

M. Hailey."

It is relevant to notice that this correspondence ends with the following official comment: "From all available accounts it is clear that there will be a keen

contest during the next general election. In Bengal the fight will be a triangular one. It is not yet definitely known Mr. C. R. Das will himself contest a seat but there is not the least doubt that some members of the old Extremist party, who withdrew their candidates at the last moment two and half years ago, coming into the field again. The second party consists of those who call themselves "Independent Liberals" and so far as is known, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee will be the central figure. Last comes the party now in power in the Legislative Council. The fight in Bengal will certainly be an interesting one and if the Governor follows English constitutional practice, he will have no alternative but to appoint Ministers from parties commanding the majority in the House."

Asutosh Mookerjee's distinguished son late Dr. Shyamaprosad Mukherjee was described as the 'hinge of debate' in our parliament. Asutosh Mookerjee's role in the Legislative Councils during the years 1899 and 1904 could be described almost in identical terms. But his decision now to enter the legislature must have been due to his conviction that he would best serve the cause of education by taking a hand in shaping governmental policy.

He retired from the High Court on 31 December, 1923 but he died suddenly on 25 May, 1924 at Patna, where he had gone to argue as an advocate in the celebrated case known as Dumroan Raj Case. He went to the house of a very humble man in Patna on his invitation to dinner. After this dinner he fell ill.

Death was as sudden as it was unexpected. From Patna his body was brought to Calcutta for cremation. The tremendous upsurge of public feeling was unprecedented. The huge mourning procession which accompanied the body to the cremation ground gave silent expression to grief for the cruel loss which had just struck the country. It was the most touching farewell to greatness.

Sources:

Convocation Addresses 1915-1923.

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Hundred years of the University of Calcutta.

Government of India Records—Home Department—Political 1923 (File No. 180).

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CHAPTER VIII

END OF A GREAT CAREER

Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das said, in his tribute of respect to Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, "He was a great judge but his greatness was greater, far greater than the greatness merely of a great judge . . . I doubt whether you can come across a greater educationist than Sir Asutosh Mookerjee but here again I stand on my original observation—he was far greater than merely a great educationist. His heart was with the nation. He was a great builder. He tried to build the great Indian Nation."

The central aim of his nation-building activity was the organisation of higher education. As it has been said, "He worked for the Calcutta University and through that for all Indian universities." This is apt to be forgotten. A new generation might very well ask what could possibly be the significance of those battles which he fought long ago. They should know that the life of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee gives us a history of the struggles, the ambitions, the achievements and hopes of university education in India.

The *Times* wrote on 22 January, 1877, "The Hindu, at any rate in Bengal, has taken with passive receptivity whatever impress we have endeavoured to set on him. He has learnt our language, repeated our history, dabbled a little in our science and has shown a remarkable aptitude in repeating the lessons we have

taught him. His new knowledge has commonly proved to be skin-deep. It has left him essentially very much the same sort of being it found him or it has made him a good deal more conceited than he was. It has not added anything solid on which his own good opinion of himself could be fairly based." The task which Sir Asutosh Mookerjee set before himself derives much of its meaning from this context. University education in India suffered from calculated insufficiency.

He grew up in the formative period of Indian nationalism. In his college days he saw the Ilbert Bill agitation and the racial arrogance of which it was a manifestation. His first public speech was made in 1883 in protest against the imprisonment of Surendra Nath Banerjee. He was then an undergraduate student of the Presidency College. He became a lawyer, a legislator and a municipal commissioner. As a legislator he was very active first in the Bengal Legislative Council and then in the Imperial Legislative Council. He shared with Surendra Nath Banerjee in the Provincial Council and later with Gokhale in the legislative Council of Lord Curzon the frustration which was the lot of Indian legislators of those days. His constructive mind was not fitted for this negative role, however useful it might be. He had become a Fellow of the Calcutta University in January 1889. A devoted student of higher mathematics, a research worker thrilled by his research studies and conscious of his intellectual superiority over those who guided our academic destinies, he made a deliberate choice. In

the University he made all work that came his way his own. When he got the only official position to which he perhaps ever aspired he felt he could devote his superabundant energies to his work in the University. Here he could play a constructive role.

From the Ilbert Bill agitation in 1883 to Montague's declaration in 1917 the period was the high noon of empire. There was a hardening of the ruling race idea. Gokhale wrote for an Inter-racial Problems Conference a paper in which he explained how British disinclination to carry into effect the policy to which they were in a way committed by what they had said in 1833 and in 1858 gradually created suspicion, surprise, disappointment, anger and a rapidly rising anti-British feeling, a new pride in the culture and civilization of the East, a new impatience of western aggression and western domination.

It has been said that the identification of the interests of all classes of British residents in India was Curzon's contribution. To the Tea planters of Assam he said in 1901, "I look upon all Englishmen in this country as engaged in different branches of the same great undertaking. Here we are all fellow countrymen, comrades and friends. The fact that some of us earn their livelihood or discharge their duty by the work of administration and others by cultivating the resources of the soil does not differentiate us one from the other." Again, at Barakar, he said in 1903, "My work lies in administration, yours in exploitation, but both are aspects of the same question." This attitude, this ruling race idea, prevented an appreciation of the

capacity or claims of the Indian people. There was no inclination to recognise any form of equality or even near equality. The autocratic alien bureaucracy was more paramount than ever. The Mackenzie Act was calculated "to destroy the dominance of the educated Hindu in the Calcutta Corporation." Under the Universities' Act of 1904 it was expected that British control of higher education would be stabilized. The Partition of Bengal was "a beach mark defining the high flood level of bureaucracy." The subsequent transfer of capital to Delhi was calculated to lessen the influence of "eloquent Babus" and increase that of "confident officials". To this challenge the response of the personality of Asutosh Mookerjee was very characteristic. The ring of the sincerity of his patriotism vibrates in all his utterances. He did not become a tribune of the people but he worked for his people in the sphere of activity which he finally chose for himself.

His role as builder of the Indian nation is apt to be misunderstood. He was opposed to the national education movement during the years 1906 to 1914. He had the ability to perceive that it would not succeed. He also opposed the Non-Cooperation movement's boycott of schools and colleges. He regarded it as a national calamity—50,000 students idling when they should be reading. He thought particularly of "the wasted years at the school stage." His aim was to guide the rising generation between the two pitfalls—"obsequiousness and intransigence". Boycott of the established university system of education was a slogan

he hated. He disliked altogether the perfervid nationalism of the platform. He thought that the emotional abandon which characterised the Bengali would lead to disaster if they chose to wreck university education. At the height of the Non-Cooperation movement he addressed students from the steps of the Senate House—"You want a Swadeshi (national) university. Is not Calcutta University your university? The Senate and the Syndicate are in the hands of the Bengalis. It is fostered by the donations of the sons of Bengal. Every one is in native dress. There is no foreign influence here. Should you insult this noble patriotism, this generous self-sacrifice?" The moving voice and the memorable appeal gave expression to his own cherished thoughts, his own interpretation of his patriotic service.

It is said that in 1919 Ernest Rutherford, famous for his atomic research, could not attend a meeting of experts which was to advise the British government on defence against German submarines. He was censured for his non-appearance. He retorted, "Talk softly please. I have been engaged in experiments which suggest that the atom can be artificially disintegrated. If it is true it is of far greater importance than a war." Asutosh Mookerjee could also speak in this strain that his nation-building activity in the University of Calcutta was perhaps more important than other forms of nationalistic activity.

He undertook the task of saving higher education from bureaucratic domination. But he could not possibly be satisfied with that limited role. He said

in one of his Convocation addresses—"Plans and schemes to heighten the efficiency of this university have been the subject of my day dreams . . . they have haunted me in the hours of my nightly rest." He wanted to elevate our culture to the rank of a world force in terms of equality with others. India was not to remain "a ward of a civilized power". This attitude was very much necessary, specially at that moment. The ardour of rising self-respect demanded it. Learning and research, he felt, were the imperious needs of the time, the awakening of higher intellectual and scholarly ambition. R. P. Paranjpye wrote in July 1924, "we, students of mathematics, felt proud of our countryman on reading a reference to him in Edward's Differential Calculus as having found a geometrical interpretation of the complicated differential equation of the fifth order of the general conic." R. P. Paranjpye was himself a distinguished product of a foreign university. He shared with many of his less distinguished countrymen the regret that India occupied such an inferior position in the domain of higher studies and research.

Sir Asutosh Mookerjee did so much for Indian learning. He never crossed the seas and he never felt for himself the rhythm of the modern western world. But he was anxious to bring India to the mid-current of modern intellectual life. One has only to see his library and all those books on university education in Germany, France, U.K. and U.S.A. and read those well thumbed pages and form an idea of the extent of his studies on higher education in the west. In one of his hearty *tête-à-têtes* with rising

young men he is said to have remarked, "*Ekśo deṛśo bachar age amader thakurdadara ki karto janis? Tara du ṇata Pharsi ṇa'rto ar kharam ṇaye diye berato. Eito chilo sekale amader daur?*" "Do you know what our fathers and grandfathers used to do a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago? They used to read two pages of Persian and used to walk with wooden sandals. This was all that they did in those times." In his address at Mysore he said, "we cannot sit on the lovely snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas absorbed in contemplation of our glorious past. . . We cannot waste precious time and strength in defence of theories and systems which, however valuable in their own days, have been swept away by the irresistible avalanche of world-wide changes . . . we can live neither in nor by our defeated past and if we would live in the conquering future, we must dedicate our whole strength to shape its course. . . let us raise an emphatic protest against all suicidal policy of isolation and stagnation." In higher teaching and research he followed the western model.

But he had a great respect for our intellectual heritage. He combined in rare perfection reverence for India's intellectual tradition with a passionate pioneering zeal for modern studies. The claims of research in a system of higher education were first put forward in this university by Ananda Mohan Bose, a brilliant product of the Calcutta University. The proposal was summarily rejected as a paradox. Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar was a Fellow of the university from 1871 till his death in 1904. He could not under

prevailing circumstances, think that the University of Calcutta would do what he thought of doing. He therefore created the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. Asutosh Mookerjee described him as "the spiritual father of every one of us, however eminent, whose aspiration lies in that direction" (speech-Science Convention 1917). With his own exiguous resources, his energy and devotion Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar could just keep it going. Rajendra Lal Mitra became a Fellow of the University in 1863. He became President of the Asiatic Society in 1885. He could not perhaps think that the University of Calcutta would organize research in the field of humanities in the manner in which the Asiatic Society was trying to do it. In 1904 every one in authority talked about the teaching university but G. K. Gokhale was not inclined to attach much importance to this talk. Bombay and Madras found that higher teaching and research under the auspices of universities were distant ideals. Asutosh Mookerjee took courage in both hands and gave shape to these ideals. He succeeded in inducing the Government of India to give grants for chairs in economics, pure mathematics, mental and moral philosophy but in the case of science two princely benefactions could bring from the government the only response that when funds were available the request of the university for these grants would be considered along with other claims. In a confidential note circulated among members of the government the Education Secretary referred to the "wonderful ingratitudes" of the University of Calcutta for which they

had made provision for three chairs, funds for the Law College Hostel and an annual grant of Rs. 65,000. The attitude of the Government towards higher scientific and technical education was very unsympathetic. The university was left to its own resources.

The credit for planning the edifice of higher study and research in the humanities as also in science and technology in the University of Calcutta must go to Asutosh Mookerjee but he said in his Convocation address in 1914, "I in no way claim to be the first to whom this idea of a further step, a step forwards and upwards, to be taken by the university has occurred. The ideas and aspirations to which I am endeavouring to give utterance are shared by many of my Indian countrymen, by many of my fellow citizens of Bengal, probably by more than one of the very members of the university whom I see around me." Every educated Indian could feel exalted at this lengthening of national prospects.

It has been said that he focussed too much attention on post-graduate study and research and the examination standard was lowered so that there might be a rush and he could depend upon the surplus of examination fees for the support of his cherished post-graduate departments. The bottom third of Cambridge or the fourth class of Oxford does not certainly affect the quality at the top. The university, as it has been said, addresses itself outwardly to all, intrinsically to the best only. The lowering of this examination standard did not affect the really good products of the university. Intellectual life, at its highest level, in the

University of Calcutta, was never more productive than in the second and third decades of the twentieth century in which the system had its trial. Restless intellectual activities of physicists, chemists, mathematicians, philosophers, historians, philologists, archaeologists and other literary men produced a real intellectual ferment. It would be difficult to catch that spirit again. The lowering of standard had one remarkable result. The Sadler Commission reported: "In recent years recruits have begun to come to the university in increasing numbers even from the cultivating classes ... through the normal routine of high school and colleges leading to the degree. This is the recognised pathway to government employment or to success in the legal profession... It is the one chance of escape from the rigid social barriers imposed by the system of caste. The adoption of academic ambitions by even a small proportion of the cultivating class is an event of great moment in the social history of Bengal. It may be the herald of a social revolution." It certainly helped the creation of a muslim middle class and the rapid collapse of our rigid caste structure.

Government incurred only a small fraction of the expenditure on collegiate education. The money which Government could spend on primary education was not certainly devoted to higher education. He took care to point out that the demand for higher education and the demand for primary education were on two different planes. "Learning, speculation and research of the highest type have developed and beautified the world independently of any general system of

primary education." Bhudeb Mukherjee, the eminent educationist, who was regarded in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century, even in the secretariat, as the greatest authority on primary education in this part of India made certain remarks which deserve to be quoted in this context. He said, "Religious sanction growing weak, village communities nearly gone, manufacturing industry come to the verge of ruin, heaviest incidence of taxation falling upon land, a foreign language becoming the language of court and commerce, the natural incentives to popular education have been weakened. Talk of educating the masses and leaving them where they are betrays an ignorance of the simplest principles of sustained human action. Government organized on *laissez faire* principle comes little into touch with the mass of the people. The Permanent Settlement has erected countless heritable tenures intermediate between themselves and their ryots, the foundation of a middle class. English speaking Bengalees are either Brahmins, Kayasthas or Vaidyas, men to whom something like the present position would have been assigned under the old system of Manu. To sacrifice higher education in the supposed interest of the lower classes is simply to overthrow the foundation on which alone the whole system can possibly rest. A channel has been created through which ideas can be admitted and what we want is to distribute them widely." The new departure in secondary and collegiate education with which the name of Asutosh Mookerjee is associated reacted upon the country as a whole precisely in this sense.

Another aspect of the nation-building activity of Asutosh Mookerjee is apt to be overlooked. Bipin Chandra Pal has drawn pointed attention to it in his *Character Study*. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee introduced M.A. degree in the vernacular literatures of India. He was keenly conscious of the fact that the fundamental unity of India is cultural. Those who were to take the M.A. Degree in Bengali were required to acquire proficiency in at least one other modern Indian language and literature—Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telegu, Oriya, Urdu. They could serve as the medium of communication of the highest thought of Bengal to other provinces. Calcutta University would be a great intellectual exchange mart. President Radhakrishnan pointed out the significance of this aspect of his activity at the opening of the Asutosh Institute of Languages at Calcutta on the 25th June, 1964. He said, "Genius anticipates experience." We now talk of national integration. He thought of it in those days on those lines.

He has been described as the most forceful public character of his generation. But he had many critics. Petty men opposed him, and also some who were by no means petty. There was violent criticism of one-man rule which he established in the University of Calcutta. His distribution of patronage was the target of these attacks. It was argued that the University was too much under the domination of one man for healthy corporate life. "Chronic President of the Asiatic Society", "Invariable President of all committees"—such expressions were often used. It was

also said that he was petulant when opposed or contradicted. It is perhaps not necessary to mention the names of his critics. It would be enough if the charges against him are enumerated. His brave words, his memorable utterances were described as "heroics".

To what extent was this one man rule temperamental? To what extent was this due to circumstances? To organise the forces of progress in the teeth of a very strong opposition, with a numerically weak support, created conditions which developed controlling tendencies always latent in a strong personality. Patronage was sometimes used by him to strengthen support and to weaken opposition. His personal ascendancy was due to his intellectual qualities, his devotion to university affairs, his energy and the undoubted ability which he possessed. All this helped to make it too much of one man show which made for certain weaknesses when the master mind was no longer there. But with an alien bureaucracy anxious "to have a finger in every pie, probing, popping and disturbing" and a patriot from the depths of whose soul there arose "a fervent prayer for the perennial welfare of our alma mater" such a development was perhaps inevitable.

He was not a relentless critic of government. His criticism was always measured, straight and fearless. He therefore won the respect of his opponents. His criticism of the Universities Bill in 1904 was not less outspoken than that of Gokhale. But Curzon learnt to respect this opponent and he was nominated by his successor as Vice-Chancellor after Pedler. He was an

outspoken critic of the Mackenzie Bill. Yet he was nominated a Commissioner of the Corporation of Calcutta. Did the government think that they would succeed in winning him over? He never gave the government an opportunity of misreading his mind. He was not an extremist in politics and the words 'moderate' and 'extremist' are inapplicable in this context. All that can be said is that "he did not indulge in the luxury of a nonconformist conscience." He showed his hands very openly in the legislature and in the University of Calcutta. But the government of Minto never lost its respect for him.

When there was a talk of appointing an Indian member of the Viceroy's executive council Minto wrote on 23rd January 1907, "so far I have avoided naming any Indian as a possible member of my council but if we decided to have one, the man whom I should name is Dr. Mookerjee, Vice-Chancellor of the University and High Court Judge. His evident force of character has always impressed me. He had always kept clear of Congress association and I believe, if we accepted him as a native member, his appointment would be generally approved throughout India. Speaking for myself I should certainly feel that the addition of Dr. Mookerjee to my executive council far from being a loss of power would be a great addition of strength. He is a Hindu but I doubt if his appointment will arouse Muhammedan criticism." Other names were suggested—G. K. Gokhale, R. C. Dutt, Rashbehari Ghose. But he wrote again on 11 June, 1908, "Excepting Mookerjee I see no one the least

likely to meet the required condition." A new name now appeared—that of S. P. Sinha. It proved to be acceptable to him. He wrote, "Sinha is high in public estimation as well as in his profession and he and his family are socially in touch with European society. The upward step from the Advocate General would not seem unnatural."

Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was not in touch with European society. His orthodoxy was perhaps a part of his nationalism. He is reported to have declined the invitation of Lord Curzon to attend the Coronation of Edward VII in London out of respect for the susceptibilities of his aged mother. In his own house he sat in his "native nakedness" with no garment over the upper part of his body. He would receive his European visitors also in that characteristic homely Indian style. Outside his court hours he could be seen in his familiar Indian costume, on all public occasions, in his coat and *dhoti*. He told Binay Kumar Sarkar in the course of a conversation. "It is your nationalist leaders, the *swadeshiwalas* of today who dare not appear in public in the streets of Simla or Darjeeling or even in Calcutta with their *dhoti* and slippers on for fear lest they should be observed by their foreign acquaintances but I, the son of a Brahmin, have not in my life, felt ashamed to expose my sacred thread to the gaze of the foreigners. Cowards at heart as these leaders are, how can they command respect from foreigners or emancipate the mind of young Bengal or inculcate in young men the spirit of independence and equality with the ruling race? He

espoused the cause of *dhoti* with an ardour which reminds us of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar.

His orthodoxy was an expression of his respect for the past. It was perhaps due to his profound historical sense. But it was never rigid. In his social outlook he resembled Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, whom he must have regarded as his exemplar in many ways. When he made arrangements for the re-marriage of his eldest daughter, who was a child widow, there was threatened social boycott, even legal action and orthodox newspapers spared no uncomplimentary epithets in their armoury. His aged mother gave her approval. Nothing could thereafter divert him from the course he had intended to take. It seems difficult now to imagine that as late as the year 1908 a widow re-marriage in Calcutta could create so much social commotion. Sir Gurudas Banerjee, for whom Sir Asutosh Mookerjee had the highest respect, promised to be present but his family priest objected to his going, tore off the sacred thread and threatened to wreck the annual death anniversary ceremony of his mother. Sir Gurudas Banerjee could not therefore come and could only express his regret for his inability to keep his promise. Unfortunately she became a widow for the second time not long after the re-marriage. She predeceased him and the disconsolate father perpetuated her memory by placing at the disposal of the University of Calcutta government securities for Rs. 40,000 to establish a lectureship to be called Kamala Lectureship in memory of his beloved daughter. He also created an endowment in the uni-

versity to perpetuate the memory of his mother. The Jagattarini gold medal was to be awarded for original contribution in letters or science in the Bengali language. The first recipient was Rabindra Nath Tagore. Another endowment for the encouragement of the study of chemistry or physics perpetuated the memory of his father. The University of Calcutta was the temple where he thus perpetuated the memory of those whom he loved.

From an active public life he could always return to an environment of love, affection and tenderness. Farquhar, in his *Crown of Hinduism* (p. 102), gives a description of Hindu family life which does not appear to be an idealized picture. Its appropriateness in the case of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee is undeniable. "The Hindu home hides some very beautiful things. The faithfulness, devotion and love of the wife and mother, the willing ministry of the broken-hearted widow, the obedience and affection of the sons and daughters even when grown up, the subdued joy and the shady retirement of the *zenana*, the sacramental note present always and everywhere—these are things of real worth and beauty, exquisite as a bed of scented violets in an English forest glade."

He had a rather stout and even flabby physique. But he was healthy and strong. He could stand any amount of hard intellectual labour and he had an inexhaustible capacity for work. Lord Minto wrote to Lord Morley, "Sir Asutosh is almost as black as my hat." He was typically Indian in the brownish colour of his skin, in his dress, manners and in his

appearance, so very different from the imitation European type.

He re-defined Indian higher education . He changed the climate of higher studies. One has only to read his numerous addresses and study his plans as President of the Post-graduate councils in Arts and Science to form an idea of his mastery of problems and disciplines, needs and expectations. He loved his world of books and it was his capacity of leaving his world of work and browsing among the books in his magnificent collection, "this stroll in the pastures of literature, science or mathematics that sustained and re-created his energies." In his library his books, 72,000 in number, were in methodical disarray. They were his acquaintances, friends or companions. He knew where each book was placed and he could direct anybody to the proper place. No one was perhaps better fitted to undertake the task of advancement of learning among people of his mother country. C. E. Cullis, who was Hardinge Professor of Higher Mathematics from 1917 to 1922, thus describes his place in the intellectual life of India: "The conversion of the university from a purely examining and inspecting body into a teaching institution would no doubt have been effected even without his efficient help but the addition of numerous schools of active research was almost entirely due to his efforts." He himself possessed that scholarship which enabled him to make true scholarship racy of the soil.

Vice-Chancellors in India do not now play a creative role. No one occupies the elevated and exalted

position which he occupied. He was a Bengali but all India took pride in him. "The sunshine and warmth of his eager, vital and joyous personality" made it easy for him to communicate his enthusiasm for learning to all near him. No one at the helm of affairs in the universities has now a sense of a mission. A Vice-Chancellor nowadays is only an administrator. There is no comprehensive awareness, and everything is now narrowly conceived in terms of personal advancement and not personal fulfilment. The weaknesses and dangers of democracy are also rampant. "The most strenuous organiser and the most persistent canvasser" (words used by him in the debate in the Universities Bill in 1904) normally predominates. It is rather unfortunate that his image is now a little dim.

His life's work is best described in his own words. "The felling of trees, the digging out of stubborn roots and stones, the draining of marshy soil, the clearing of obstructive weeds and finally the toils of ploughing and sowing. Now, at last, the first fruits of all this labour begin to show themselves . . . the cultivator has done his best." Just as Sir William Jones lighted the lamp of oriental research in the western style in the Asiatic Society which enabled others to light similar lamps elsewhere, so did Asutosh Mookerjee start organized research under university auspices in Calcutta. Similar lamps have been lighted elsewhere. Circumstances have changed, ideas have changed, new ways of solution of some of the difficulties he faced have been found but more universities

curiously enough mean less enthusiasm for learning.

The philanthropic dollar, welfare resources of the developing state, grants from the University Grants Commission and foreign foundations for start-up needs have made things easy for university administrators. But no university in India has been able to trigger a great intellectual movement which Sir Asutosh Mukherjee could do with his very limited resources. H. R. James wrote, in his Report on Public Instruction in Bengal (1908-1909), "I have permitted myself to say that the financial is the predominant factor in education. In a temporary and limited sense that is true ; but not ultimately. In the last resort education depends on the personal factor—the ideas that permeate the work—the informing spirit. Success depends on the average integrity and high-mindedness of individual workers, far more than on salaries and equipment." More than four decades after his death we feel that his trail remains unblazed. That basic impetus, 'the subtle salt', the true university spirit is now for various reasons missing in the field of Indian university education. We miss also that imaginative insight which made his genius adapt itself to our national needs. But "in all true genius there is a touch of art, and art is immortal."

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APPENDIX—A

HIS LIBRARY

The four sons of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee donated their father's collections of books to the National Library in a letter dated 31 March, 1949, which was addressed to Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Minister of Education, Government of India. They wrote, "This collection of books is a unique one so far as a private library is concerned. Books in different languages, Indian and foreign, in subjects so various as literature, history, philology, economics, mathematics, astronomy, physics, physiology, anthropology, law and art are to be found in this library. Various journals of diverse societies in different centres also find a place. Besides there is a rich collection of reproductions of paintings

It is our desire that this unique private collection of India should be given to the nation so that scholars may have the opportunity of utilizing the same and proper precautions are taken for its location, preservation and maintenance. The entire collection should be kept in a separate hall as one unit as far as possible and be known as Asutosh Mukhopadhyay Collection". The gracious offer was accepted. The collection contains 72,000 volumes.

Dr. Gangaprasad Mookerjee had the awareness of his son's great hunger. He purchased for him a collection of books to suit his taste. This formed the

nucleus of what grew to be a unique private library. His illustrious son's favourite pursuit was collection of books and happy browsing in his library. Standing orders were placed by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee with booksellers and publishers in Europe and America. In his correspondence files we find letters written by famous publishing firms to the Hon'ble Judge Mukhopadhyay giving him advice of forthcoming publications. One letter written by Otto Schulze & Co., Edinburgh on 14th September 1909 gives us a very vivid impression of Asutosh Mookerjee, the great lover of books—"Sending de luxe edition of Basile Pentameron, expressing regret that the ordinary edition was sent by mistake". Preservation arrangements were adequate. But no complete list or catalogue was made of the huge collection. He had no difficulty in finding the book he wanted. His wonderful memory served him better than a catalogue or a hand list that could be prepared by an assistant according to the broad divisions of Dewey.

His library contains the collected mathematical papers of J. J. Sylvester and Arthur Cayley, the scientific papers of J. C. Adams, the four volumes of *Mecanique Celeste* by La Place, translated into English with annotation by Nathaniel Bowditch. The inside cover contains Sir Asutosh's written comment "very rare". The collection also contains the first English edition of the elements of geometry of the Most Ancient Philosopher Euclide. In the Science Section we find Colebrook's translation of the *Lilavati* with Sanskrit text. J. B. J.

Delambre's *Historie de l' astronomie*, E. Donovan's *Natural History of the Insects of India*, J. Gould's *A Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains* with 61 plates, W. Herschel's *Scientific papers and Mathematical and Physical papers* of all prominent contemporary and near contemporary scientists. Among science journals mention may be made of *Acta Mathematica* from Stockholm, the *Analyst*, *Journal de physique* of Paris, *Nature* etc. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee's sons very naturally wanted that the advice of experts should be taken as to the continuation of the series which are in this collection.

He took particular interest in collecting rare and out of print books. Of Robert Browning's *Flight of the Duchess* "all on vellum" only 125 copies were printed. His copy is no. 15. It is an illustrated and decorated edition. John Raphael Smith: *His Life and Works* with its 30 photogravures, is also in this collection. The works of William Shakespeare printed in 1893 with 1243 engravings, American edition of Boydell's *Illustrations of the Dramatic works of Shakespeare* with precious engravings was acquired by him. The collection includes A. W. Upson's *Lyrics and Sonnets* of which only 25 copies were printed in 1909 on expensive Japanese vellum. "Choice editions" of many such rare publications were regularly sent to him. F. B. Solvyns' *Hindoos* in four big volumes is also to be found in this library. The English Bible of Dove Press, "One of the noblest printed books ever made" is also there. The *Book of Common Prayer* printed on hand-made paper in 1903, Goethe's *Faust*,

bound in Morocco (1876), the first edition of Johnson's Dictionary of the English language (1755) are rare items in this collection.

The Fine Arts Section is one of the richest. It has about 1,000 entries on architecture, sculpture, painting, music. European schools of painting are well represented as also English schools of painting. Coomarswami's Rajput Painting and Ravi Varma's works are in the collection. C. R. Day's Music and Musical instruments of Southern India and the Deccan has also enriched it. We should include in the list of art treasures W. Anderson's The Pictorial Arts of Japan, T. Daniell's Oriental Scenery, J. B. Fraser's Views of Calcutta, F. R. Martin's The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey, Original Sketches of Indian Character, Customs and Manufacture by Menpes, M. Roose's Dutch Painters of the nineteenth century, M. C. Salaman's French Colour Prints of the XIIIth century, H. L. Tilly's Wood Curving of Burma.

Literature has more than 4,000 entries including many standard editions of works by great literary men. The collection contains the first illustrated edition of Paradise Lost, the Library edition of Ruskin in 39 volumes, wonderfully well preserved. Scott, Defoe, Dickens, George Eliot, Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, Thackeray, Charles and Mary Lamb are fully represented in the collection. There is a section on American literature which is very full. Goethe's works in 14 volumes, the works of Moliere, Balzac, Voltaire, the facsimile reprint of the first edi-

tion of Don Quixote (1605) by Cervantes which was published in 1905 are all in their place. There are more than twenty translations in English and French of the Life and exploits of Don Quixote. The Latin authors Ovid, Virgil, Cicero, Tacitus are all there. The tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, comedies of Aristophanes and different editions of Homer's works, Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle have enriched the collection.

For students of Indian history the volumes of British Parliamentary Papers, particularly those relating to India, Bethune Society Papers, Proceedings of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, Sacred Books of the East series, different editions of the Ramayana, including William Carey and Joshua Marshman's edition with original Sanskrit texts and English prose translation form a very valuable section of the collection. Of Kirtibasha's Ramayana the first printed Bengali edition is there as also all publications of the Serampore Press. In the Sanskrit Section the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, with their commentaries, works of William Jones, Wilson, Max Müller, Macdonald, Weber, are also included. Boehtlingk's Sanskrit Dictionary, Radhakanta Deb's Sabdakalpadrum, Kalhan's Rajtarangini with its French translation along with the Sanskrit text, are to be found here. All wellknown Sanskrit series adorn the bookshelves. The orientalia includes Jatakes Ed. by Fausboll and translated by T. W. Rhys Davids, Mahavastu with Sanskrit text Ed. by Senart. Quran with Sale's translation, Legge's The Chinese Classics 2nd edition,

Manava-kalpasutra with a preface by T. Goldstucker. There are thirty different editions of Rubiyat of Omar Khayyam. The Calcutta Edition of Arabian Nights by Sheikh Ahmed Shirwani is also there.

Of Traveller's Accounts there is the Hakluyt Society's series in 180 volumes. There is an edition de luxe published in 1903. There are many eighteenth century publications of Travels. Of Purchas Pilgrims there is a complete set. Rennell's Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan (1792), Fryer's "A New Account of East India and Persia," enrich the Travellers' Accounts Section. Many accounts of early voyages with illustrations, maps and charts are also available.

All important Indian Law Reports and many foreign law series, rare law reports from England and America are there. In this branch the library is naturally very rich. But Confucius, Kant, Hobbes, Voltaire, Emerson and Sankaracharya have also their appropriate places in this collection. There are rare pamphlets in this library which are not to be found in the National Library's main collection. He has been described as "a scholar and a Bibliophile at the same time. This is indeed a rare combination." [*Asutosh Mukhopadhyay, Centenary Exhibition 1965 National Library, Calcutta, List of Exhibits, National Library Calcutta. Books are not shown in italics in this appendix*].

APPENDIX B

HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN BIHAR AND ORISSA

AN ADDRESS BY SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

An address delivered by Sir Asutosh at the Govt. House, Patna, on the 15th March 1924, at the Annual Meeting of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, under the Presidency of Sir Henry Wheeler, Governor of Bihar and Orissa, and Patron and President of the Society.

“It is now nearly ten years ago, when proposals were first set on foot for the foundation of a Research Society for Bihar and Orissa, that a distinguished scholar expressed to me grave doubts as to the wisdom of the intended course. He maintained that India needed no new institutions for the promotion of research in the field of Indian Culture ; he even hinted that though the newly created province might require a tribunal for the administration of justice and an institution for the spread of high education, the plans for a new Research Society could be justified only as inspired by feelings of provincial exclusiveness. I emphatically repudiated what seemed to me a radically erroneous notion. I maintained—and my conviction has grown stronger with the lapse of years—that Bihar and Orissa had a special claim to organise a Research Society.” Then Sir Asutosh discussed the

origin of the Pataliputra City and its historical importance.

“The task of restoration of the history of our country necessarily implies the reconstruction of our chronology ; you cannot pile up a magnificent edifice till you have erected the scaffolding, however tedious the task and ungainly the sight.” Sir Asutosh referred to the articles published in the Journal of the Society (Ancient to Modern India). He praised the papers of scholars.

“I notice further that you have published a portion of the invaluable Journals of Francis Buchanan from the precious originals in the India Office Library, and I trust, I may be permitted to throw out a suggestion for another undertaking in a similar line. It would be in the fitness of things if your society could publish a complete edition of all the contributions of that modest scholar, Principal John Watson McCrindle, who devoted his life in this very place to the study of the action and reaction of Greece and India, the two nations of antiquity which attained the pinnacle of greatness in the domain of intellect. His works, carefully edited and brought uptodate in the light of modern research, would be welcomed by scholars, and their publication would not, I feel convinced, be financially impossible.”

“I cannot conclude my observations on your contributions without some reference to the discovery of the sanskrit manuscripts by Mr. Jayaswal, who, for once, has here united the functions of an antiquarian and a jurist.

“The discovery of these manuscripts reminded me of the rich treasures that lie hidden in your province, a veritable storehouse of literary relics of the past. In the Puri District alone, at least two hundred thousand palm-leaf manuscripts are reported to exist, while Tirhoot abounds in large collections of manuscripts as well in the libraries of great nobles as in the humble abodes of Pandits. A systematic survey should be organised, and thorough search for these manuscripts carried out before priceless treasures are destroyed by the ravages of time.

“We rejoice to think, however, that in the domain of Moslem learning, at any rate, the task of preservation of manuscripts has already been taken well in hand by the farsighted wisdom and munificent liberality of a private citizen, my revered friend the late Mr. Khuda Bukhsh, whose life-long passion was to acquire and store all varieties of manuscripts with tact and vigilance, regardless of considerations of health or money. I can still recall the thrill of pleasure I felt on the occasion of my first visit years ago to the Khuda Bukhsh Library, where you find enshrined a unique and invaluable collection of materials sufficient to occupy many generations of workers. On the life of the Prophet, you have *Zad-ul-Ma'ad* of Ibn Qyyam—a priceless gem, nowhere else to be found. On Hadith, the library possesses a unique collection. No less striking is its historical collection ; to mention a few : you have the famous history of Zahabi, the works of Ibn Asakir, Subki, Ibn Hazin, Samani, Yaqut. What a splendid catalogue ; each a scholar's joy, a collector's

pride. Have you not abundance of light? only alas, if you would follow light. In Law, too, the Library can win an easy first. It is the proud possessor of Abu Hazin's work on jurisprudence—a work of which no other copy exists elsewhere.

“Equally conspicuous is the collection in science. Nor is the collection of medical works less distinguished. Zahravis' work on surgery, if published, would, doubtless, rob Europe of many a boasted invention of surgical instruments. All this is delightful to hear. It sends a thrill of joy in us—the residents of Patna, you will say. But could you not suggest, you will add, some useful lines of study? If you were to ask me this question it would be a legitimate and pertinent question. Yes, I have suggestions to offer to you. In this connection, the first thing that comes to my mind is the pre-Islamite Arabia. Caussion de Percevel and Wellhausen have done a great deal to lift the veil; but I venture to maintain that they have not said the last word, much less have they fully exploited the field. It is still, if I may say so, a virgin soil. Could you not bestow your attention on this? But still more fascinating a subject is the “Social condition under the Caliphate.” Here there is no lack of guides. Apart from the poets—Farazdaq, Jarir, Abu Nawas and others of lesser note—we have the stupendous Kitabul-Aghani, a veritable mine of information. It is the monumental work of Abul Faraj-ul-Isphani and can be most usefully utilized for a portrait of the social and political conditions under the Caliphate.

“Take another subject equally moving, the

influence of Byzantine Law and Theology on Islam. Nor shall I omit one subject which has always attracted me—the history of Muslim politics and Muslim administration. Flugel first dealt with this subject, so far as I am aware, but since then it has lain neglected. Only recently Professor Mez has thrown a flood of new light on it, but neither Flugel nor Mez is accessible to those that know not German. Disciples of Plato and Aristotle, the Muslim thinkers were the forerunners of Hobbes and Locke and other European publicists of later times.

“Witness the works of Mawardi and Ibn Janna’a ; I am not forgetting Al-Farabi but he belongs to an older generation. I shall dwell further on the monumental collection in the Khuda Bukhsh Library as a mine of information and store-house of learning. In every branch of Islamic study rich, I should say, unique is its collection. Could you not then make this Library the seat and centre of Islamic research? How tempting the field ; how full to promise the pursuit? In literature, in history, in law, in science, in medicine—in all branches—rich is your treasure, calling for the seeker to come, to unlock it, to distribute it broadcast. I trust you will not misunderstand my insistence on your co-operation to promote Islamic learning by all means legitimate in your power. Consider for a moment the magnificent achievement of the British and the Continental universities in this direction.

“Moslems at one time held adoft the torch of learning. Did they not collect, translate, study and elucidate the works of Greeks, Persians and Hindus? Does

not their historian, Masudi, speak with exulting pride of their passion for studies and their devotion to letters? They need surely no other example but their own to urge them on to their sacred but, alas, forsaken duty."

APPENDIX C

ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE IN THE FIELD OF MATHEMATICS

By

DR. R. N. SEN

Sir Asutosh was a versatile genius, but his main interest lay in the field of Mathematics. During the ten years from 1880 to 1890, that is, during the years when he was preparing for and taking his B.A., M.A. and other examinations, he published nearly twenty original mathematical papers of high quality and merit. This is an accomplishment which has few parallels in the history of the mathematical world. These papers were published in the *Messenger of Mathematics*, the *Quarterly Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics* and the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*; and he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, of the Royal Astronomical Society, a member of the Royal Irish Academy, of the Mathematical Societies of London, Edinburgh, Paris, Palermo and New York. When he was only a first year student of the Presidency College, Asutosh published his first paper in which he gave an elegant new proof of the 25th proposition of the first book of Euclid. While still an undergraduate student, he published his second paper in which he gave some extension of a theorem enunciated by Salmon. Whilst yet a student

of the fifth year class he wrote his third paper 'A note on elliptic functions' which was of outstanding merit. In this paper he established a certain addition theorem in the theory of elliptic functions by a new method based on the properties of the ellipse. With regard to this paper Prof. Cayley observed that it was remarkable how a real result was obtained by consideration of an imaginary point. This paper has been referred to in Enneper's "Elliptische Funktionen". Immediately after taking his M.A. degree, Asutosh published a paper "On the differential equation of a trajectory." In this paper he took into consideration the solution given by the Italian mathematician Mainardi of the different equation of oblique trajectory of confocal ellipses. This solution was so complicated, and inelegant that it was impossible for any one to trace the curve from it. Asutosh showed by an ingenious process that Mainardi's solution could be replaced by a pair of remarkably simple equations which admitted an interesting geometrical interpretation. These equations have been quoted by Prof. Forsyth in his book on Differential Equations in later editions. This paper on a particular trajectory led him to publish another paper on general trajectory which showed his power of generalisation and elegant expression. In this connection the following account may be mentioned: Asutosh read Mathematics with Prof. W. Booth in the Presidency College. Booth mentioned to Asutosh that Prof. M. Roberts in his lectures on differential equations at the University of Dublin used elliptic coordinates to solve Mainardi's problem. Asutosh had no op-

portunity to examine the solution, if any, arrived at by Roberts and it was believed that the solution had never been published. Booth's mention of it set Asutosh working and he soon found out the result by the help of elliptic coordinates. Again, during the years 1887-1889 Asutosh took up, in a series of three papers, the study of the differential equation of the general conic which was obtained by the French mathematician Monge. These papers roused a good deal of interest among a section of mathematicians. With regard to Monge's equation, Prof. Boole in his book on Differential Equations remarked that the geometrical interpretation of the equation had not so far been obtained. Later two geometric interpretations of the Mongian were proposed, one by Prof. Sylvester and the other by Lieut. Col. Cunningham. Asutosh in his papers critically examined these interpretations and showed that none of them could be accepted as a true interpretation as contemplated by Boole. Finally he gave his own geometrical interpretation of the Mongian which was accepted on all hands. This interpretation has been quoted by Edwards in his book on Differential Calculus. In a letter to Asutosh from Cambridge, dated the 14th September, 1887, Cayley remarked about his criticism of Sylvester's interpretation that "it is of course all perfectly right". Cunningham wrote "Professor Asutosh Mukhopadhyay has proposed a really excellent mode of geometric interpretation of differential equations in general, *viz.*, writing the equation in the form $F=0$, the geometric meaning of the symbol F considered as a magnitude (angle, length,

area etc.) in any curve whatever (wherein F is of course not zero) is, if possible, to be formed ; then the geometric meaning of that equation obviously is that the quantity F vanishes right round every of the family represented by the differential equation. This is the most direct geometric interpretation yet proposed." (Nature, Vol. 38, pp. 318-19). A list of Sir Asutosh's papers and summaries of them are appended at the end. It may finally be mentioned that in 1893 he published a text book on Geometrical Conics, meant for the beginners of the subject. The book was highly reviewed and it ran into many editions.

Thus as a mathematical investigator, Sir Asutosh's keen insight and power of original thinking revealed themselves very early in his life. Truly Prof. Ganesh Prasad wrote, "Sir Asutosh's contributions to mathematical knowledge were due to his unaided efforts while he was only a college student. After Bhaskara, he was the first Indian to enter into the field of mathematical researches, as distinguished from astronomical researches, and did much which was truly original." It can be said without the least hesitation that if Sir Asutosh had chosen to devote himself entirely to the study of Mathematics, he could have secured for himself a place in the front rank of world mathematicians. But fate ordained otherwise. In his Convocation address of 1914 Sir Asutosh said in a pensive mood "For years now, every hour, every minute I could spare from other unavoidable duties—foremost among them the duties of my judicial office—has been devoted by me to University work. Plans and schemes to heighten

the efficiency of the University have been the subject of my day dreams, they have haunted me in the hours of nightly rest. To University concerns I have sacrificed all chances of study and research, possibly, to some extent, the interests of family and friends, and certainly, I regret to say, a good part of my health and vitality. Do not imagine, however, that I repine at the sacrifices made. I have had my reward in many ways."

Apart from his connection with the University of Calcutta, Sir Asutosh was associated with a number of scientific, humanistic and literary institutions. In 1907 he was elected President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal to which office he was repeatedly elected. In 1909 he became the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Indian Museum. In 1913 the Indian Science Congress Association came into existence and he was its first President. He brought into existence the Calcutta Mathematical Society for encouragement and promotion of mathematical researches and developed it under his fostering care as described below:

In 1908 Sir Asutosh founded the Calcutta Mathematical Society and guided, as President, the activities of the Society from its inception till his death. The inaugural meeting of the Society was held on the 6th September, 1908, at the Senate House of the Calcutta University at which 27 members were present and over which he presided. At the next two meetings, Constitution and Rules of the Society were adopted and the first Council was formed with Sir Asutosh Mookerjee as President, Sir Gurudas Banerjee,

Prof. C. E. Cullis and Prof. G. S. De as Vice-Presidents, Rai Bahadur A. C. Bose as Treasurer and P. L. Ganguli as Secretary. The first publication of the Bulletin of the Society came out in 1909 and later, at the initiative of Sir Asutosh, the Calcutta University Press undertook to print the Bulletin from its second volume. Society's meetings continued to be held at the Senate House until the meeting which was held at the Science College on the 8th October, 1915. All subsequent meetings of the Society were held in the Society's room at the Science College. During Sir Asutosh's life time 83 meetings of the Society (other than Council meetings) were held, the last meeting being held on the 1st March, 1924 ; and at *every one* of these meetings Sir Asutosh presided. The number of ordinary members of the Society (resident and non-resident) at the close of 1912 rose to 195, and by this time quite a good number of eminent foreign mathematicians were made honorary members of the Society. Not a few of the members of the Society, ordinary and honorary, presented mathematical books to the library of the Society, and monetary donations were received from benevolent persons from time to time. A large number of mathematical journals from all parts of the world were received on exchange basis with the Bulletin. In 1909 Prof. Ganesh Prasad, in 1913 Prof. A. R. Forsyth and in 1915 Prof. W. H. Young delivered addresses on their researches before the Society. Under Sir Asutosh's personal initiative, encouragement and inspiration, research workers, some of them very brilliant, began to gather round him whose

contributions were published in the pages of the Bulletin. Papers were read at the Society for the first time by Profs. C. E. Cullis, Ganesh Prasad. S. D. Mookerjee, P. L. Ganguli and S. C. Bagchi in 1909, A. C. Bose and M. N. Roy in 1910, L. Narayan and J. C. Narayan in 1912, J. M. Bose in 1913, B. B. Datta in 1914, Sir C. V. Raman, F.R.S., N.L., M. N. Saha, F.R.S., N. K. Majumdar and S. K. Banerjee in 1915, S. N. Bose, F.R.S. and N. M. Basu in 1916, D. N. Mallik, N. R. Sen, S. M. Ganguli, H. P. Banerjee, S. C. Dhar and H. N. Datta in 1917, Sir B. N. Seal, S. C. Kar, B. N. Pal and P. C. Sen Gupta in 1918, S. K. Mitra, F.R.S., B. M. Sen, A. B. Batta and N. N. Sen in 1919, N. N. Ghosh and J. Ghosh in 1920, B. B. Roy, G. Bhar, O. Upadhyay, Hanumanta Rao and S. C. Mitra in 1922, M. Ghosh and B. B. Sen in 1923.

II. MATHEMATICAL PAPERS BY ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

1. Proof of Euclid I, 25—Messenger of Mathematics, Vol. 10 (1880-81), pp. 122-123.
2. Extension of a theorem of Salmon's—Messenger of Mathematics, Vol. 13 (1883-84), pp. 157-160.
3. A note on elliptic fuctions—Quart. Jour. of Pure and Appld. Maths., Vol. 21 (1886), pp. 212-217.
4. On the differential equation of a trajectory—Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng., Vol. 56, Pt. II, No. 1 (1887), pp. 117-120.
5. On Monge's differential equation to all conics—Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng., Vol. 56, Pt. II, No. 2 (1887), pp. 134-145.
6. A memoir on plane analytical geometry—Journ. Asiatic Soc. Beng., Vol. 56, Pt. II, No. 3 (1887), pp. 288-349.

7. A general theorem on the differential equations of trajectories—*Journ. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, Vol. 57, Pt. II, No. 1 (1888), pp. 72-99.
8. On Poisson's integral—*Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, Vol. 57, Pt. II, No. 1 (1888), pp. 100-106.
9. On the differential equation of all parabolas—*Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, Vol. 57, Pt. II, No. 4 (1888), pp. 316-332.
10. Remarks on Monge's differential equation to all conics—*Proc. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, February 1888.
11. The geometric interpretation of Monge's differential equation to all conics—*Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, Vol. 58, Pt. II, No. 2 (1889), pp. 181-185.
- 12, 13. Some applications of elliptic functions to problems of mean values, First and Second Papers—*Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, Vol. 58, Pt. II, No. 2 (1889), pp. 199-213, 213-231.
14. On Clebsch's transformation of the hydrokinetic equations—*Journ. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, Vol. 59, Pt. 55 No. 1 (1890), pp. 56-59.
15. Note on Stoke's theorem and hydrokinetic circulation—*Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng.*, Vol. 59, Pt. II, No. 1 (1890), pp. 59-61.
16. In a curve of aberrancy—*Jour. Asiatic Soc. Beng.* Vol. 59, Pt. II, No. 1 (1890), pp. 61-63.
17. Mathematical Notes (Questions and Solutions)—*Educational Times, Lond.*, (1890-92), Vols. 43 (pp. 125-151), 44 (pp. 144-182), 45 (pp. 146-168).

APPENDIX D

IN THE ASIATIC SOCIETY, INDIAN MUSEUM SANSKRIT CONVOCATION AND BENGALI LITERARY CONFERENCES

After the death of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee the following resolution was passed by the Council of the Asiatic Society: "The Council put on record their sense of irreparable loss to the society caused by the death of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, its Vice-President, repeatedly its President and other office-bearer for a quarter of a century in succession ; as also their grateful recognition of the prominent place occupied by him in the Council and activities of the Society, on his constant solicitude for its welfare, its repute and its service to scholarship and no less their affectionate regard for his personality equally lovable, able, zealous."

His contributions enriched the society's journal from 1887 to 1890. In 1906 the first of his many inspiring addresses to the Society was delivered. He gave a review of the work done and gave an indication of some of the directions in which research might be profitably carried on. He first put the case in favour of Tibetan studies because "they are likely to open up sources from which considerable light may be expected upon the history of Sanskrit as also of Pali literature." Referring to the approaching retirement of Justice Pargiter he said, "the regret is deepened by the

fact that there are few, if any, amongst the junior members of this distinguished service to which he belongs who are qualified to take his place in the field of oriental scholarship". He drew the attention of members to the varied activities of the society particularly the search for Sanskrit manuscripts under the supervision of Haraprasad Sastri and the search for Arabic and Persian manuscripts under the supervision of Denison Ross. Some of the manuscripts secured were unique. Cataloguing of these manuscripts and publication of the unique manuscripts should engross the attention of the Society. The width of his outlook as an inspirer of research studies is proved by the following statement: "The past history of the society makes it painfully clear that, while the interests of Sanskrit learning have been carefully watched and nurtured, the interests of Asiatic and Persian literatures have, of late years, been sadly neglected. In this department, at any rate, we have distinctly lost ground. We must retrieve our reputation". He concluded his speech with the following words—"the problems in oriental scholarship, both literary, and scientific, which still await solution are so numerous and so fascinating, that I cannot conceive any adequate reason why our society should ever stagnate".

Two years after this address he again dwelt upon the importance of the exploration of Tibet. "The secluded monks of Tibet will be able to reflect back to India the light which they borrowed centuries ago and which has now disappeared amongst ourselves." He urged younger members of the Society with an

aptitude for the acquisition of languages to turn their attention to Tibetan with a view to elucidating the sacred writings of the Lamas.

On a paper on Indian mathematics he made the following comment: "Our knowledge of early Indian mathematics is somewhat limited and fragmentary. There is no exhaustive collection of Sanskrit manuscripts on astronomy and arithmetic. It is difficult to make a definite pronouncement on the subject of the indebtedness of Indian mathematics to foreign sources. Dr. Thibaut has established in his classical paper on the *sulva sutras* the antiquity of Indian mathematics and even if it be assumed that Aryabhata was indebted to the Alexandrian astronomers he gave back the light he borrowed from Alexandria in a brighter and more useful form. As one of our great Sanskrit poets says:

The sparkling gem gives back the glorious radiance.
It derives from other light but the dull earth
Absorbs the blaze and yields no gleam again.

He was glad to inform members of the Asiatic Society that on the Arabic and Persian side enquiries were made and a considerable number of manuscripts were collected from Ahmedabad, Bombay, Hyderabad and Madras including one on jurisprudence.

In his address in 1908 he gave a sketch of the work done by members particularly younger members of the society—About Harinath De's publication of the original of a very interesting history of Dacca he said, "I venture to express the hope that the unique linguistic attainments of the distinguished editor will

be more frequently placed at our disposal for the elucidation of many an obscure point of Indian history which still await solution." Rakhal Das Banerji's energy as a research worker also received his commendation. Reference was made to his numismatic history of the Punjab during the first four centuries of the Christian tra. Nilmoni Chakraborti's re-editing of the Pala inscription in the Indian Museum with critical notes was mentioned as also papers by Syamadas Mukherjee and Mahendranath De.

In the absence of Sir Thomas Holland, who was the President, Asutosh Mookerjee delivered the annual address in 1909. He drew particular attention to a resolution of the medical section of the Asiatic Society. He said, "The resolution emphasises the paramount necessity for the establishment of a properly equipped sanitarium for the treatment of phthisis. One may, I hope, without offence further venture to maintain, the opinion that if the major portion, it not the whole of the funds raised for the purpose of a marble memorial to Her Late Majesty the Queen Empress were devoted to the foundation of an institution for the amelioration of suffering humanity, it would be more consonant with the wishes of the people."

In his first address at the annual meeting he had spoken about the organisation of research on Tibetan studies. In 1910 he spoke about the search for bardic chronicles. Haraprasad Sastri, after his retirement from the Principalship of the Sanskrit College, undertook on behalf of the Society a tour of two months

in Gujarat and Rajputana in quest of these chronicles. This preliminary survey was from the nature of it, rather perfunctory. But Asutosh, with his instinct for research, told those who had assembled at the Asiatic Society, "Investigation into many a recondite problem of Indian history and of the development of different branches of the Indian race have yet to be undertaken and vigorously pushed forward and scholarly men of younger generation may rest assured that their labours in their fields will be amply repaid."

In 1911, in the absence of the President, he again addressed the society. He spoke again in favour of the development of what might be compendiously described as Tibetan studies. He drew attention to The Tangyur, a Tibetan encyclopaedia of literary works, sacred and secular, consisting of 225 volumes, one of the four sections of which contains more than 1,000 separate treatises on theology, philosophy, logic, ethics, grammar, rhetoric, poesy, prosody, lexicon, astronomy, medicine, alchemy and mechanical arts. The other Tibetan encyclopaedia to which he drew attention was called the Kangyur with its 108 massive volumes. He emphasised the fact that these works were the fruits of the joint labours of the Indian Pandits and the Tibetan Lamas. To this attractive field of investigation he drew pointed attention.

In 1915, in response to a call from the chair, he delivered an inspiring address. He admitted that substantial progress was made in Tibetan studies during the last few years. He referred to the work of H. B. Hannay, Saratchandra Das and Satischandra Vidya-

bhusan. But the task was inexhaustible and would furnish ample occupation to successive generations. He then referred to another of his favourite subjects the bardic and historical survey of Rajputana. The work began by Haraprasad Sastri was taken up by an enthusiastic Italian scholar Dr. Tessitori. The scheme he submitted was a comprehensive one and was accepted by the Council of the Society. The period to be covered was a long one, the documents were in Dingala (western Rajasthani) and Pingala (the Brajebhasa). "The Bardic and historical survey of Rajputana is a work that is not only important but is also urgent and necessary". The premature death of Dr. Tessitori stopped work on these lines in the Asiatic Society. We are not surprised that he included Rajput history as a special subject for the M. A. degree in history and requested some of the teachers of the post-graduate department to specialise in this field of research.

But again and again he referred to the neglect of Islamic studies, particularly muslim jurisprudence. He said with regret "our contribution is exceedingly meagre and fragmentary in the domain of muhamendan Law, the system of muslim jurisprudence". He spoke about the work done by French, Dutch, German, Russian and Swedish scholars, Von Tornauw, Goldziher, Sachau, Kohler, Nauphal and D'hossen. He concluded with regret, "I confess to a feeling of humiliation when I contrast the solid performance of the scholars mentioned with the exceedingly little contributions by the investigators in this country. The

brilliant work accomplished elsewhere will for ever remain a standing testimony to the scholarship of those investigators and the munificence of their respective governments."

In his inspiring addresses in the Asiatic Society he spoke about unexplored territories which were waiting for devoted investigation by bands of scholars. He was always encouraging young men of promise in many and various ways. In 1913 he communicated a paper written by Nalinikanta Bhattasali on "A forgotten kingdom of East Bengal." The same year he proposed the name of Sri Ramesh Chandra Majumdar for membership of the Asiatic Society. In 1917 he proposed the names of Sri Satyendra Nath Bose, Meghnad Saha and I. J. S. Taraporewala for membership of the Society.

In the University College of Science and Technology he was trying to create a fervent passion for the new view of nature, in the Asiatic Society he pleaded for an awareness of our historical and cultural heritage. In the Sanskrit Convocation we find him in the role of a friend of the pundits and of the ancient learning, treasured up by them, anxious to revive the intellectual glory of ancient Nabadwip and pleading for necessary adequate support, encouragement and recognition. In the Indian Museum, he urged in favour of the improvement of public galleries with a view to broadening the minds of those who were not engaged in scholarly research. In the many Bengali literary conferences over which he presided he would talk about the glorious future of Bengali literature.

He hoped that educated Indians would regard it as their own in the same manner as Vedic literature was regarded in olden times.

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ERRATA

- P. 8 line 17 for Charles Croft read Alfred Croft
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- P. 34 line 7 for lecturer read lecture
- P. 58 last line for Charles Croft read Alfred Croft
- P. 62 fourth from bottom for aproval read approval
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- P. 119 line 10 for resarch read research
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- P. 143 line 12 for morement read movement
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